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ITORIAL

DAYS OF TRIAL, RAYS OF HOPE

It is now more than six months since the American Writers Congress, and despite the surprisingly strong response it evoked it would be hard to say that the state of letters has improved significantly in that time. Indeed, there are some events—Reagan's executive order on classification, Congress's passage of a naming-of-agents bill, public school book-banning—that seem to darken further the cultural skies.

Yet there are unquestioned rays of hope as well. The committee to organize a national writers' union is proceeding apace, has just issued a bold and comprehensive list of demands for writers, and is holding its first national meeting this month. The Writers Congress has sponsored a public forum in Washington in defense of the Freedom of Information Act with unusually broad and spirited participation.

And now, in two separate court cases, the rights of authors have been given an additional measure of protection. A Federal District judge in New York City has determined that author Gerard Colby Zilg is entitled to collect some $25,000 from his publisher for its failure to promote his book adequately "without any sound business reason." It is the first time that a publisher has ever been held liable for breaching its implied promise to an author of a "good-faith effort" to sell a book.

And a jury in California has exonerated *Penthouse* magazine in the $522 million libel suit brought against it by the founders of La Costa, a resort outside San Diego. That decision, brought in despite the hostility of the judge and the dubious shenanigans of La Costa's attorney, Louis Nizer, may well make potential litigants more cautious about going after authors because they write unpleasant truths and after publications because they are well known and well heeled.

Rays of hope: enough for a few silver linings.

BOYCOTTS: LEGALITY AND MORALITY
Aryeh Neier

GRENADA: THE MENACING RUNWAY
Christopher Hitchens

WEST BANK BANTUSTAN
Lucy Komisar

ADVANTAGES OF A NEW CONVENTION
Sanford Levinson

THE FIRST ERAS OF THE SECOND SEX
Tabitha M. Powledge

UNION DEMOCRACY AT STAKE—I

WHAT ROLE FOR OUTSIDERS?

The Supreme Court this past year has heard two cases with important implications for the labor movement in America. Last week, it ruled on Finnegan *v.* Leu, *a case involving the Teamsters, and sometime in the next month it is expected to decide on* Steelworkers *v.* Sadlowski. *Below, from partisans in those suits, we present opposing views on the meanings and interpretations of the issues posed in the cases.* —*The Editors*

ALAN BARNES

The future of democracy in the United Steelworkers of America rests at the moment in the hands of the U.S. Supreme Court. The case: *Steelworkers* v. *Sadlowski*. The question: whether a Steelworkers rule that bars nonmembers from participating in union elections is legal or not. The outcome is of vital importance to the future of the labor movement. For if the rule is upheld, there is little doubt that its repressive provisions will be adopted in other unions where entrenched officials hold sway, a prospect boding ill for the democracy and vitality of organized labor.

In 1977, Ed Sadlowski ran for president of the Steelworkers. He lost the election, but his maverick campaign had posed an impressive challenge—not only to his opponent, Lloyd McBride, but to the entire Steelworkers administration. For union officials, Sadlowski's quarter-million-vote total—though 80,000 votes short of McBride's—was too close for comfort. In 1978, they moved to prevent another "Sadlowski" from happening again.

At the union's convention that year, the administration proposed and had adopted an amendment to the constitution saying that candidates and prospective candidates for high union office—and their supporters—were not

(*Continued on Page 652*)

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LETTERS.

GELB'S INCISIVE REPORTS

Philadelphia

I applaud Richard Pollak's important article "Covering the Unthinkable" [*The Nation*, May 1]. However, I believe he is mistaken in bracketing Leslie Gelb with Richard Burt and Drew Middleton.

Gelb has written a number of penetrating and independent-minded articles since he joined *The New York Times*. On October 18, 1981, on the strength of interviews with senior Defense officials, he debunked the idea that the Russians are masterminding world terrorism. On April 11, *The Times* ran his important study on the balance of conventional forces in Europe, which concluded that there was an "essential equivalence"—a finding that contradicts the key Pentagon rationale for first use of nuclear weapons. About the same time, he disclosed that Defense and State officials were "dismayed" about President Reagan's claim that the Russians have "a definite margin of superiority." Gelb added that these officials themselves accept the concept of parity, as does the Central Intelligence Agency.

Gelb gave a skeptical review to the Pentagon's booklet on Soviet military power (September 27, 1981) and did an article that impartially set forth *both* U.S. and Soviet ways of tallying theater forces in Europe (November 22, 1981). It is also worthwhile to recall that he was the Defense Department editor of the "Pentagon Papers" and later served as a senior fellow at the Carnegie Endowment for Peace. *Mark Sacharoff*

POLLAK REPLIES

New York City

Leslie Gelb brackets himself with Richard Burt and Drew Middleton: by sometimes covering "defense" matters for *The New York Times* and sometimes working for the State and Defense Departments. That he is more enlightened than his two colleagues is a welcome fact. But, on the evidence of his reporting, it in no way places him outside the perimeter of conventional government thinking about how to seek arms reduction.

Richard Pollak

THE BIRTH OF THE FREEZE

Waltham, Mass.

"How the Freeze Campaign Was Born" [Michael Kazin, *The Nation*, May 1] is informative about the freeze campaign in California, but not about the birth of the national freeze campaign. The national campaign was in fact conceived by Randall Forsberg and Randall Kehler; and, in the words of the new book by Senators Ted Kennedy and Mark Hatfield, *Freeze! How You Can Prevent Nuclear War*, "the initial stirrings of the new grass-roots campaign against the nuclear arms race . . . first appeared at tiny Traprock Peace Center" in Deerfield, Massachusetts, where Kehler was a staff member.

Traprock Peace Center, no longer quite so tiny, was founded in 1979 by the International Seminars on Training for Nonviolent Action to promote disarmament and provide education in nonviolent alternatives. While I.S.T.N.A. has been very pleased by the successes of the freeze campaign, we believe that all disarmament activities need to be complemented by the promotion of a better understanding of nonviolent alternatives to the use of military force. Until the public believes that there *are* alternatives, disarmament is not likely to occur.

Beverly Woodward
I.S.T.N.A. Coordinator

THE LIBERALS' PROGRESS

New York City

When I was a lad, the call was to ban the bomb. Now it's to freeze it and, as a special favor, not to use it first. I know we're supposed to be grateful for small mercies, but only a liberal could call this progress.

Christopher Hitchens

EMENDATION

*A number of readers have nominated additional organizations for "A Directory of Antinuclear Groups" [*The Nation, *May 1]. As David Corn wrote in the introduction to the catalog, such groups are too numerous for an abbreviated list to have included them all. At the risk of slighting unnamed groups yet again, below are six more entries.*

—The Editors

☐ American Committee on East-West Accord
227 Massachusetts Ave., N.E.
Suite 300
Washington, D.C. 20002
202-546-1700

☐ Federation of American Scientists
307 Massachusetts Ave., N.E.
Washington, D.C. 20002
202-546-3300

☐ Fellowship of Reconciliation
P.O. Box 271
Nyack, N.Y. 10960
914-358-4601

☐ Prolifers for Survival
252 East 9th St.
Erie, Pa. 16503
814-456-1791

☐ United Campuses to Prevent Nuclear War
1346 Connecticut Ave., N.W.
Suite 1101
Washington, D.C. 20036
202-296-5600

☐ U.S. Peace Council
7 East 15th St.
Suite 408
New York, N.Y. 10003
212-989-1194

ST. JOHN'S PROTESTS

Annapolis, Md.

It is inaccurate to include *St. John's Review* in an article on "college students interested in starting or maintaining conservative newspapers" [Fran Schumer, "The New Right's Campus Press," *The Nation*, April 3]. *St. John's Review* is in no way a student newspaper. It is published by the dean's office of the Annapolis campus of St. John's College, and its editor and members of its editorial board are tutors at the college.

And it is not only inaccurate but unjust to the editor of the *Review* and to St. John's College to imply, as Schumer does, that *St. John's Review* has changed its editorial policy from one of being "apolitical" to one of being political with a conservative bias ("now features occasional articles by conservative scholars"), and that it is a grant from the Institute for Educational Affairs that is responsible for this alleged change. It is inaccurate because the *Review* contained occasional "political" articles both "conservative" and "Marxist" before 1980 and because such articles do not make a magazine "political." It is unjust because it is logically fallacious to argue *post hoc, ergo propter hoc.*

Such bad logic, applied to human affairs, is innuendo. To use it in this case is slyly to accuse the editor of the magazine, and the publisher, of being "bought" by the I.E.A.

To imply such a thing without providing any evidence of its truth is hardly worthy of the traditions of a periodical as renowned as *The Nation*. Not only so, but it is also to adopt the very worst tactics—smear tactics—of those whom *The Nation* has over the years courageously opposed. I am, frankly, disappointed that the present editorial standards of the magazine permit such writing.

Edward G. Sparrow
Dean, St. John's College

SCHUMER REPLIES

New York City

The article did not say *St. John's Review* was a student newspaper. It said it was "associated with St. John's College." As for content, Edward Sparrow is right. I did not prove that the content of *St. John's Review* was affected by the I.E.A. grant. I merely suggested the possibility, which is something one must consider when an allegedly apolitical publication accepts $27,000 from an explicitly political group.

Fran Schumer

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EDITORIALS.

'Pax' Atlantica

"The problem in Europe today might simply be that the pursuit of détente differs fundamentally from the pursuit of peace." So writes Rudolf Bahro, the dissident East German author (whose most recent work is the prescient *The Alternative in Eastern Europe*), in a communiqué to us from his exile in West Germany. Bahro is regarded as a somewhat iconoclastic political theorist, but he is certainly right to argue that underlying Henry Kissinger's idea of détente was the unholy faith in the concept of nuclear deterrence; and deterrence, as Kissinger constantly reminds his audiences, requires the maintenance of military "strength." In practice, therefore, détente means a headlong nuclear arms race.

But it is not only such iconoclasts as Bahro, or the burgeoning peace movement of which he is a part, that have called into question the principle of détente and the Atlantic alliance that stands behind it. There is a growing resentment of American power in other quarters too, and there are those in the boardrooms and the party caucuses as well as in the streets who urge a break with the United States.

It might help, in assessing this new mood of Europe, to

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use the taxonomy of British author Mary Kaldor, whose 1978 book, *The Disintegrating West*, identified three categories of Europeans: *1*) the Atlanticists, basically free-trade New Dealers and Social Democrats, backed by the multinational corporations, who want a unified global market and a single capitalist state; *2*) the Gaullists, descendants of the New Mercantilism of the late nineteenth century, who want to break American hegemony and forge a new Super Europe, militarily strong in its own right and economically protective of its own large corporations; and *3*) the Socialist Autonomists—including members of the "green" parties, the disarmament movement and certain Socialist parties—who would break down both American hegemony and European nationalist power and use a united Europe to oppose large multinational corporations and large military establishments.

The Atlanticists are obviously still in control today, but for the first time in the thirty years of the Atlantic alliance they are under strong and growing pressures from all sides, pressures which are heightened as the spheres of influence of the American and Russian superpowers recede. The Gaullists question the will and the ability of the United States to defend European security and suggest that a Super Europe free of interference from the Americans could both strike a better military balance with the Russians and establish better markets for European corporations. The Autonomists demand a new political order, leaving behind the Thatchers and the Schmidts as well as the Jaruzelskis and the Ceausescus, and have taken to the streets for a Europe that is not only nuclear-free but socialist, democratic, decentralized and neutralist.

Against the fear that a neutralist Europe without NATO would be vulnerable to the Soviet Union, the Autonomists argue that neutralism would also hasten the disintegration of Soviet influence in Eastern Europe and allow the nations there to reassert themselves without raising fears of their falling prey to the Americans. Poland is a case in point: as long as the division of Europe into American and Soviet spheres prevails, Russia must do anything to keep Poland from falling under Western domination. But, asks Bahro, "is it so absurd to think of changing Europe in such a way that, in a more or less good-willed fashion, the Soviet Union would, in fact, let go? Haven't the Soviets always had sympathy for something like an 'Austrified' Germany? Divorcing ourselves from the confrontation- and deterrence-oriented thinking of Europe's middle would be the most essential first step toward paving the way for the emancipation of Eastern Europe from Soviet hegemony."

And Bahro concludes: "We should say to the North Americans [that] we will no longer allow a Pax Americana (or Pax Atlantica-Pacifica) to be forced upon us, since this brand of 'peace' not only has as its organic counterpart a Pax Sovietica for Eastern Europe, but is no longer an appropriate means for preventing war."

That is as clear as any message can be. Is there a chance that Atlanticists on both sides of the ocean—but particularly those along its Potomac estuary—will pay it heed?

The National People's Court, a division of the National Prisoners' Rights Union in Leavenworth, Kansas, has awarded *The Nation* its "certificate of recognition as the outstanding newsworthy publication of the year" for its article "Sex Exploitation Behind Bars: One Woman Who Chose to Say No," by Ann Jones [April 17]. That article drew attention to two suits, filed by Indiana prisoner Carol Ann Wilds charging sexual harassment and sex discrimination in prison, in which the prisoners' rights union participated.

On Boycotts

In an article in *The New York Times* a few weeks ago, Walter Goodman (late of WNET, now of *Newsweek*) took to task television broadcasters for condemning a boycott of sponsors' products by the Coalition for Better Television, an organization that seeks more "Christian characters, Christian values, and Christian culture" in programming. Goodman argued that, as a method, all boycotts are equal—whether against nonunion lettuce, manufacturers of napalm, South African athletes, commercial sponsors of *Saturday Night Live* or sponsors of programs that blacklist performers and others suspected of having Communist associations (Goodman's examples). Promoting blacklists, at least as far as method is concerned, is the same as protesting apartheid. There is a right to boycott, and those who don't approve of the consequences should not, in Goodman's view, condemn the tactic. If they are the targets, and if they believe that the consequence of complying would be unjust, they should refuse to be intimidated. If others are the targets of a boycott that seeks an unjust end, they should help defuse the effect, for example by purchasing more of the products that are being boycotted.

Goodman has a point, but he carries it too far. He is on solid ground, in my view, in insisting that everyone has a right to engage in boycotts for any reason, good or bad. Individually, my right to withhold my patronage from anything that offends me is beyond question. Organizing others to act collectively is simply a way of expressing a point of view peacefully. It should be defended as vigorously as the freedom to speak and to publish should be defended.

Defending freedom of speech, however, does not mean giving up one's right to condemn either what is said or the way it is said. In some instances—though these seem always to cause confusion—it may even be desirable to point out that it would be destructive of freedom of speech if the views advocated by a speaker were to prevail, while simultaneously defending the person's right to speak. There is no contradiction here. On the contrary, it is the opposite position—suppressing a speech in order to defend freedom of speech, as some claim they are doing when they deny adherents of totalitarian philosophies the right to speak—that is, like destroying a village to save it, a logical absurdity.

Goodman's examples, in my view, should be divided into three categories.

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The first includes boycotts against nonunion lettuce, manufacturers of napalm and South African athletes. These are boycotts against *practices* that are deemed objectionable: exploitation of farmworkers; manufacturing weapons that inflict horrible casualties on noncombatants; apartheid. Such boycotts do not involve efforts to suppress expression. They can be differentiated without difficulty from boycotts intended to prohibit a speech or a television appearance by a spokesman for California lettuce growers, or for manufacturers of petrochemicals, or for the government of South Africa. A boycott intended to prevent such people from speaking or from being heard couid limit diversity of expression; a boycott against practices deemed objectionable expresses a point of view but does not silence anyone.

A boycott against products manufactured by the sponsors of *Saturday Night Live* is another matter. Its intent is to force the program off the air, shutting off the expression of a point of view through the mass media. One can join Goodman in calling on sponsors to demonstrate that they have backbone; and it would doubtless help if those who want this point of view to be heard make it a point to buy the products of the program's sponsors. Yet the availability of this means of resistance does not seem to me to preclude denunciation of the boycotters. They are neither condemning a practice nor expressing disagreement with a point of view; they are attempting to prevent others from hearing a point of view they don't like. Yes, they have a right to do this. No, they don't have a right to escape condemnation for doing it.

The third category—and, in my view, the most pernicious—is the boycott that is not concerned with the point of view being disseminated but with the point of view of a performer. In that category are the boycotts that helped produce the blacklists of the 1950s and the threatened boycott of the Boston Symphony Orchestra that may have persuaded it to cancel a scheduled performance with Vanessa Redgrave this April. What is involved here is not an attempt to prevent a point of view from being heard through a particular medium but to prevent it from being heard anywhere. Boycotts inspired by the political views of performers are intended to demonstrate that the penalty for professing controversial beliefs will be unemployability, even in circumstances where the performer's views are irrelevant. The consequences for freedom of speech are terrifying. What is involved is not a protest against a practice, nor disagreement with a point of view, nor even an attempt to prevent others from hearing a point of view; rather, such boycotts attempt to make it impossible to articulate a point of view that is objectionable to the boycotters.

Again, there should certainly be a right to organize such boycotts, as there should be a right to be wrong in expressing a point of view. But I condemn them in the strongest possible terms. That condemnation extends, of course, to the institutional managers (television executives and movie producers in the 1950s, the management of the Boston Symphony Orchestra today) who do not stand up to such boycotts. In denying employment to performers whose views inspire boycotts, these managers permit those boycotts to be effective.

In making these distinctions among varieties of boycotts, what is not relevant, it seems to me, is whether I oppose or approve of the practices or points of view that are the targets. As a method, a boycott against products made in a unionized factory or by a racially integrated work force is as legitimate as a boycott against nonunion lettuce or against South African athletes. As a method, a boycott against the products of a sponsor of religious fundamentalist programs seems to me as condemnable as a boycott against the sponsors of *Saturday Night Live*. As a method, a boycott is most obnoxious when it is directed against the views of performers or other employees, anti-Communist or Communist, pro-Israel or pro-P.L.O.

Boycotts are not all morally equal, though as a form of peaceful expression they are entitled to equal legal protection. Evaluation of any practice, however, should not end with a determination of its legality. It is important to defend the right to engage in forms of peaceful expression that are intended to make it impossible for others to speak or to be heard; it is equally important to condemn morally those who exercise that right.

ARYEH NEIER

Endangered Act

Americans know little about wildlife, even less about endangered species, according to a recent Interior Department study. And the prospect for their enlightenment does not look good. In January 1981, the department made known a plan to "de-emphasize" the Endangered Species list of plants and animals. A year later, de-emphasis has become de facto: the only species to make the list since Reagan's takeover are three Southwestern plants, some Hawaiian tree snails and, in March, the Hays Spring amphipod—species already proposed for listing during the Carter Administration. The Endangered Species Program is itself in danger, despite the possibility that as many as 2 million species may make their exit from the lists of life between now and the year 2000. (Some biologists put the present per diem rate of extinction at one to three species and expect it to increase to one per hour by the end of this decade.)

Instead—and what's cheaper—the Interior Department is playing with the language. Certain now-protected species, such as the alligator, are being "de-listed" or "down-listed." This involves moving a species from the "endangered" ledger to the "threatened" ledger—which serves indeed to make the species *more* threatened.

Furthermore, the Endangered Species Act is up for reauthorization this year, and the Reagan Administration has let Congress know that it is entertaining thoughts of revision such as: eliminating requirements for setting aside "critical habitats" (because critical habitats sometimes cause developers financial hardship); making it more difficult to list endangered or threatened species; limiting protection to vertebrates only.

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Loss of species means loss of genetic diversity, the diminution of the world's gene pool into which genetic engineers can dip to produce, for instance, hardier and more disease-resistant strains of corn, barley, wheat or rice. Thus the heedless destruction of the world's wild genes will have serious consequences for food, agriculture, medicine, energy, industry. Nonetheless, at House environment hearings in March, a spokesman for the pesticide industry accused the government, weak as its effort is, of "ignoring Darwinian necessity" and "playing God" by trying to save these species. "Any species is expendable somewhere along the line," said Jack Early, "except mankind."

What should be said of an endangered list-keeping species that neglects to list itself? Humans, with their various overstocked nuclear weapons larders, are the most endangering, as well as the most endangered, species of all. Humans belong at the head of the list, being liable for the possible swift destruction of the entire critical habitat of Life.

PATTI HAGAN

Patti Hagan is on the staff of The New Yorker.

Inside Argentina

Power is gradually slipping out of the hands of the Argentine military. It could soon be lying in the streets, waiting for someone to pick it up.

It is patriotism that is bringing politics back to Argentina. Just the other day, a patriotic gathering in support of the government's invasion and occupation of the Falkland Islands turned into a rabidly antigovernment protest. The patriotic fervor was personified by Peronist leader Angel Robledo, who was more aggressively nationalistic than the three military junta members have ever been. When he said that all Peronists would choose "death with glory" rather than negotiate over the sovereignty of the islands, the crowd of 1,000 cheered, beating drums and waving flags. But the political fervor was even stronger—the political slogans coming from the crowd were the loudest of all.

The gathering was billed as a patriotic meeting in support of the government's action "in recovering the Malvinas" since, under the long-standing state of siege, political meetings are banned. But the organizers unabashedly admitted that the gathering was really an antigovernment political rally.

The Peronists, whose mass movement is splintered but still represents a majority force in Argentine politics after six years of military rule, have been the most vociferous exploiters of the conflict with Britain. In return for that support, Peronist leaders have been demanding the release of all political prisoners, the return of thousands of exiles and a tougher and more hawkish line in negotiating with the British.

Robledo, who has a reputation as the Machiavelli of the Peronist movement, could even be attempting to encourage an escalation of military operations in the hope that the generals would be defeated by the British. In fact, ever since Argentina came to the brink of war with Chile four years ago, it has been speculated that a military misadventure might bring about the downfall of the Argentine generals, as it did of the Greek colonels. "The last thing we need is victorious generals," an Argentine dissident has said. "If they are victorious, we will have the military in government for a thousand years."

But there is another school of thought, also looking toward a civilian government. Centrist politicians believe that if Argentina defeats Britain, the military will be able to retire from the government with honor—instead of having to account publicly for its activities during the so-called "dirty war," its six-year campaign against the left. Many officers openly admit that they have what is termed a "Nuremburg complex" and are haunted by nightmares about being put on trial for the "disappearance" of 15,000 to 20,000 people during the military's rule. It is exactly for that reason that many politicians have been seeking to reassure the military that they will not demand an accounting. They fear that if the military suspected a return to civilian rule would mean a return of civilian justice, the armed forces would never relinquish power.

Those same politicians feel that the conflict with Britain offers still another scenario. If the generals are *not* victorious, the politicians believe that they can inherit the government and dictate their own terms, but they hint that they might be magnanimous about any public accounting. The politicians fault the military for not preparing the ground internationally for the recovery of the Falklands and argue that, in the case of defeat, only a democratic and internationally accepted government could achieve what could not be gained militarily.

Partly because of these possibilities opened up by the Falkland crisis, and partly because the country is in a state of economic collapse after six years of military misrule, muted calls for the military to step down are now being heard.

Raul Alfonsin, leader of the left wing of the Radicals, the second largest political party, has proposed that a "cabinet of national salvation" be formed under Arturo Illia, the 81-year-old former president who was ousted from the presidency by the military sixteen years ago. The Peronists have responded with a similar idea: the return of their administration, which was overthrown when the military seized power in March 1976.

Even a resounding military victory is not likely to quell the discontent with the current government. It was the upsurge of street demonstrations that made the military decide to invade the Falklands; it may be further demonstrations that convince the military of its shaky hold. Military defeat might offer the generals an unhappy but easy way out; military success could allow them to make an honorable retreat.

ROBERT COX

Robert Cox, who spent twenty years in Argentina, ten of them as editor of the Buenos Aires Herald, *is now assistant editor of* The News and Courier *in Charleston, South Carolina.*

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CALVIN TRILLIN

Sir: I don't know who to believe anymore. First *The Washington Post* and *The New York Times Magazine* have to admit that they ran phony stories; now Ann Landers and Abigail Van Buren have both been caught recycling used letters from secondhand kvetches. It occurs to me that you may be making up quotations and letters yourself and that may explain why your column has always sounded a little—if you'll forgive me for saying so—cockamamie. Can I trust you? Please try to be truthful in your response.

R.F.G., Pelham, N.Y.

Trust me. I know some misunderstanding might have been caused by my admitting in public print recently that the editor of The Nation, *one Victor S. Navasky, once asked me whether a certain quotation I had attributed to John Foster Dulles ("You can't fool all of the people all of the time, but you might as well give it your best shot") was authentic, and I answered, "At these rates, you can't always expect real quotes." However, everyone involved understood that to be a negotiating tactic rather than an admission of guilt. As to concocting letters, I can assure you that yours is the first.*

Sir: Ten years ago, I wrote a letter to Ann Landers about my husband, who thought he was Katharine Hepburn. I signed it with a pseudonym ("Concerned"), but everyone knew it was me, of course, because I am the only Swedenborgian in Luke's Crossing, Montana. Miss Landers gave me what I thought was sensible advice ("Tell him his slip is showing"). Recently, though, she reprinted the letter as if it had just been sent, and, as it happens, I have a different husband now. He's very upset, because he thinks he's Wallace Beery. If Abigail Van Buren prints it, can I sue?

R.V.M., Luke's Crossing, Mont.

Pull up your socks.

Sir: Is it true that employees of *The Nation* are forced to sell flowers and candy in airports and turn the proceeds over to Victor S. Navasky?

G.B., Dayton, Ohio

Not exactly.

Sir: I have been a loyal subscriber to *The Nation* for forty-five years, and I simply can't imagine what possessed them to begin running a column by a bubble-head such as yourself. Where are your politics, young man? Why don't you ever write about the Scottsboro Boys? What's your position on the withering away of the state?

C.R., Boston, Mass.

I was once intensely political. I had a position on everything. If something new came up, I'd get a position on it by the end of that week at the latest. Then, a lot of new countries came into being, and a political person had to have a position on every one of them. One day, someone said to me, "I don't think much of your position on Guinea."

"My position on Guinea is impeccable," I said. By chance, I had that very morning taken out my position on Guinea and tidied it up a bit. "What is your objection to my position on Guinea?" I thought about calling him a crypto-fascist pig straight off, but I decided to keep that card up my sleeve.

"To start with, you don't have it in the right continent," he said. "It's in Africa."

"Well, no wonder some people thought that the Indonesian territorial claims were historically dubious," I said. "Still, as a Third World country, Indonesia—"

"That's New Guinea," he said.

"Is it possible we're talking about Ghana?" I said. "Or maybe British Guiana?"

"There isn't any British Guiana," he said. "It's Guyana now. What's your position on Guyana?"

"I'd rather not say," I told him.

I tried to catch up, of course, but I found that I no longer had time to do the dishes, and at the office I was falling behind in my work. Finally, I decided I could no longer be political. I kept a position on British unilateral disarmament, as a sort of souvenir, but nobody ever asks me about it—which is a shame, because it's impeccable.

Sir: Did Victor S. Navasky name names?

S.F., Kansas City, Mo.

It's all very complicated.

Sir: Don't you think CBS should have allowed the White House equal time to reply to that Bill Moyers program about three families that slipped through the social safety net? How can the press expect people to take it seriously when the networks just tell one side of the story and Ann Landers and Abigail Van Buren both keep running the same letter about some wacko in Montana who still thinks he's Katharine Hepburn?

M.N.V., Chicago, Ill.

The President's advisers differed as to how to reply. Some thought the reply should be an upbeat program showing three millionaires who were happy as clams and about to leave for extended vacations on the Continent, where they intended to depreciate Luxembourg. The hard-liners wanted to show that the parents involved were acting irresponsibly, since it was obvious that children as skinny and undernourished as theirs would slip through any net. The debate finally had to be settled by the President himself, and the program CBS rejected was to show a welfare chiseler driving to the supermarket in a Cadillac, buying vodka with food stamps and having a child at the checkout counter just to qualify for Aid to Families with Dependent Children and the Wednesday coupon special.

Sir: Who said, "You can't fool all of the people all of the time, but you might as well give it your best shot"?

L.V., Troy, N.Y.

John Foster Dulles.

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DISPATCHES.

■ NIGERIA: Boom and Bust

More than any other member of OPEC, Nigeria is vulnerable to the decline in world demand for oil. With a population of 90 million and ambitious national development plans, Nigeria is heavily dependent on oil revenues, which account for an estimated 85 percent of the government's income. When production reached 2.1 million barrels per day in 1979 and Nigeria's high-quality oil garnered premium prices, the country's economy boomed and the government asserted itself as a leader in African politics. But now production has slumped to 700,000 barrels a day, and oil companies are turning to Britain, Iran, Mexico and the spot market rather than pay the $35-a-barrel that Nigeria is asking.

When Nigeria charged that Western oil companies were reneging on long-term agreements to purchase certain quotas of Nigerian crude, Saudi Arabia intervened. The Saudis, trying to maintain the OPEC price level by defending Nigeria, the weakest link in the OPEC cartel, threatened to cut their oil supplies to companies that did not buy enough oil from Nigeria. Mobil, heavily dependent on Saudi supplies, complied and agreed to purchase some 135,000 barrels of Nigerian crude a day in April, according to *The Wall Street Journal*.

Nigerian President Shehu Shagari must weigh the potentially catastrophic effects on the Nigerian economy and his own political future of a precipitous decline in oil prices and production. Shagari, who faces an election next year, has taken the drastic and unpopular measure of curbing some imports and even banning others in an effort to slash trade deficits of $600 million a month. The cutbacks will slow industrial production, housing construction and social welfare programs, alienating many Nigerians. The continuing oil crisis will also inhibit Nigeria's assertive foreign policy and may limit its contributions to liberation movements in southern Africa.

■ PHILIPPINES: New People's Army

The National Democratic Front and its armed wing, the New People's Army (N.P.A.), make up Southeast Asia's fastest-growing Communist movement.

The front, which is a coalition of peasant, labor and church groups, says it has 50,000 full-time organizers operating in two thirds of the country's provinces and a "mass base" of about 4.5 million people (in a country of 48 million). It is hard to know the size of the N.P.A. itself. Philippine Defense Minister Juan Ponce Enrile has estimated it has 4,000 armed guerrillas and 50,000 unarmed sympathizers. Filipino scholar and activist Joel Rocamora, in the current special issue of the *Southeast Asia Chronicle* on "The Philippines in the 80's," says the N.P.A. now has twenty-seven guerrilla fronts in forty-seven provinces. In January the military announced that at least twelve new combat battalions would be activated specifically for anti-N.P.A. operations. According to Rocamora, some units that had been fighting the Moslem Moro National Liberation Front in the south have been transferred to areas where the N.P.A. is strong.

The island of Samar is one of the N.P.A.'s strongest bases and the scene of some of the bloodiest government operations against the guerrillas and their sympathizers. Last September, at Sag-od, a special unit of the military executed forty-five civilians, including women and children, in retaliation for an attack by the N.P.A. Last month 200 villagers of Samuroy were killed by artillery shells as they gathered in a chapel to celebrate Maundy Thursday. According to a "well-informed source" cited by reporter Sheila Ocampo of the *Far Eastern Economic Review*, an army lieutenant based in the area thought the large congregation was a meeting of the N.P.A. and ordered the shelling. Two thousand villagers immediately fled from their homes in the area. It is little wonder that on Samar, according to Ocampo, "it is generally believed the N.P.A. presence is more acceptable to the people than that of the military."

■ ZAMBIA: Grandstanding

Zambia's President Kenneth Kaunda irritated his African allies last month by his unilaterally negotiated meeting with South Africa's Prime Minister P. W. Botha. Kaunda was ebullient after the summit with Botha, predicting that it would benefit the whole of southern Africa. But the leaders of the other African "front-line" states and the nationalist movements in Namibia and South Africa remained skeptical.

Ostensibly Kaunda proposed the talks to deal with the "explosive" problems in Namibia and South Africa. In fact, the three-hour meeting—and luncheon in a trailer diplomatically straddling the South Africa-Botswana border—was prompted more by Zambia's ailing economy and Kaunda's political ambitions than by the struggle for majority rule.

Zambia's copper-based economy is suffering from the sharp world decline in copper prices. Despite his genuine opposition to apartheid, Kaunda cannot afford to alienate the South African regime completely because Zambia depends on South Africa's railroads for its copper exports and South Africa's harbors for its food imports. Even Zambia's nationalized mining industry is still partly owned and in effect managed by South Africa's Anglo-American Corporation. The International Monetary Fund bailed out Zambia last year with an extraordinary $946 million loan—the agency's largest ever to an African nation—but Kaunda still needs all the help he can get to cope with miners' strikes and discontent over food shortages and rising prices.

In part to compensate for his political problems at home, Kaunda yearns to regain center stage in southern African politics. During the long guerrilla war in Rhodesia, Kaunda backed Joshua Nkomo's forces against the partisans of Robert Mugabe, but it was Mugabe who was credited with the successful rebellion and became Zimbabwe's first Prime Minister. Kaunda feels slighted by Mugabe, who has eclipsed Kaunda's standing in the region.

Kaunda's meeting with Botha put him back in the

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ELIZABETH FARNSWORTH AND STEPHEN TALBOT

limelight but did little to break the dangerous deadlock in Namibia and South Africa. Kaunda has a penchant for impromptu diplomacy and fancies himself a sort of Anwar el-Sadat of southern Africa. The snag is that Kaunda's enthusiasm and good will are not sufficient incentives to draw the intransigent South African regime into meaningful negotiations. Kaunda has nothing to offer the South Africans except an opportunity for some good international press, which they never pass up.

This was the second time that Kaunda broke ranks with his African allies and embraced a leader of the apartheid regime. In 1975 he met with Prime Minister John Vorster on board a "peace train" spectacularly parked in the middle of a bridge over the thundering Victoria Falls on the Zambia-Rhodesia border. But that much-heralded "détente" summit was an immediate flop.

Grandstand summits with South African leaders, the lesson would seem to be, gain short-term fanfare but undermine African unity and accomplish little.

■ JAPAN: Shell Game

In December 1981, the mass circulation daily *Yomiuri Shimbun* polled a group of Tokyo's 20-year-olds on what the name "Pearl Harbor" brought to mind. Eighty percent could not say what happened there; most thought it was a place for a honeymoon.

Last month, Japanese explosives hit the Hawaiian islands for the first time since the 1941 attack on Pearl Harbor. Japanese ships taking part in the month-long Rim of the Pacific (RIMPAC) naval exercises shelled the uninhabited island of Kahoolawe and took part in missile exercises offshore from a U.S. base at Barking Sands, on the island of Kauai.

It was only the second such multinational exercise for Japan's Maritime Self-Defense Force. In 1980, Japanese ships first participated in the biennial RIMPAC exercises—which also include forces from the United States, Canada, Australia and New Zealand—but they fired no rounds. Like Japan's rearmament as a whole, Japanese participation in RIMPAC has come slowly, step by step, and with as little fanfare as possible.

The exercises provoked questions in Japan. The Japanese Constitution allows for only such military forces and materiel as are necessary for self-defense. Anti-rearmament politicians asked how shelling Hawaii could be interpreted as contributing to Japan's self-defense.

But the passion and strength of the Japanese peace movement have been dampened by time, and protests against the RIMPAC exercises were weak. It isn't that a consensus for rearmament exists: in fact, in spite of repeated warnings from Washington about the Soviet threat to Japan, the Japanese people continue to oppose a massive military buildup. A poll taken in March by the NHK television network showed that 55 percent of the population think military spending should be kept below 1 percent of the gross national product. (It is currently .93 percent, compared with 4.2 percent for the United States.) Sixty percent of the people think the defense capabilities of the Self-Defense Forces should be kept at present levels.

But these public attitudes have not blocked the slow but steady buildup of Japan's military might. Defense spending will increase by 7.75 percent this year, a figure that pleases the Reagan Administration.

■ BRAZIL: Election Update

In a decision hailed by the Brazilian press as a sign of the government's continuing commitment to *abertura* (the "opening up" of the political system), Brazil's Supreme Military Tribunal found last month that "Lula" had not endangered national security in leading a metalworkers' strike in 1980 [see Dispatches, *The Nation*, March 20]. Luís Inácio da Silva, who is known throughout Brazil as Lula, is thus free to run for governor of São Paulo in the national elections set for November, when Brazilians will have their first chance in eighteen years to choose governors, mayors, and state and national representatives.

Lula, a past president of one of the large São Paulo metalworker locals, and now president of the Workers' Party (P.T.), is one of Brazil's best-known political figures, but he is not expected to win the governorship of São Paulo. Although his party claims 400,000 members and has attracted considerable publicity—partly because of well-known intellectuals in its ranks (educator Paulo Freire and social scientist Francisco Weffort, for example)—it is barely three years old and shares its role as an opposition party with the older and far larger Brazilian Democratic Movement (P.M.D.B.).

In fact, the government may have been pleased with the military tribunal's decision on Lula's case. A split in the opposition between the P.M.D.B. and the P.T. can only help the government's Social Democrat Party. Leaders of the P.M.D.B., which is a multiclass party with a strong left contingent, had hoped the P.T. would not field its own candidates in November but would join an opposition front. However, Lula and his party find such a front too broad. "How can the peasant join the same party with the landowner who has expelled him from the land?" Lula has asked. "This is our opportunity to clarify our party's position."

The debate between the P.T. and the P.M.D.B. over the front reflects differences about tactics for opposing the military-dominated government. Weffort, chief theoretician for the P.T., argues that the government will not be significantly weakened by the elections, whatever their outcome, and that the campaign should serve as an opportunity to strengthen the democratic organizations of the country, specifically the Workers' Party. This reflects the party's view that the military will relinquish its power only when forced to by an organized and militant populace.

P.M.D.B. leaders, on the other hand, maintain that an opposition victory in key elections is crucial to force the government to continue *abertura* and to build the institutional base for a return to complete civilian rule.

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THERE HE GOES AGAIN.

MARK GREEN

Reagan: The President said in mid-March that Stuart F. Kindrick Jr., who suffered brain damage and partial paralysis as a result of an industrial accident in 1973, had lost his Social Security disability benefits because he had been improperly drawing them while holding a job for three years.

Truth: Social Security officials later said they had no proof Kindrick ever worked and drew payments simultaneously. Shortly before Reagan's accusation, Social Security officials decided Kindrick was too crippled to work and sent him $2,324 for the months his status had been in question. White House spokesman David Gergen said that although he wasn't sure the President's statement was accurate, "making sure we have every single fact straight" is less important than "whether the larger points are right."

Reagan: "A young man went into a grocery store and he had an orange in one hand and a bottle of vodka in the other, and he paid for the orange with food stamps and he took the change and paid for the vodka. That's what's wrong." (March 24)

Truth: Mary C. Jarratt, the Assistant Secretary of Agriculture who oversees the food stamp program, said that change from food stamp transactions are limited to 99 cents in coin and that "it is not possible to buy a bottle of vodka with 99 cents." Jarratt told a House agriculture subcommittee, "We are following up on that with the White House . . . to find the source of the story."

Reagan: At his March 31 press conference, the President said that *a*) "we haven't touched Social Security," *b*) a nutrition program for pregnant women and infants would get "much greater money than it has ever had before," *c*) the poor weren't really suffering since the Federal budget would increase by $32 billion from fiscal year 1982 to 1983 and *d*) there would be "more money" for vaccinations for children.

Truth: Reagan has moved to *eliminate* Social Security benefits for students who are children of deceased or disabled workers. Edwin Dale Jr. of the Office of Management and Budget acknowledged that funds for the nutrition program would not be "much greater" but would instead be *reduced* more than $200 million. All of the proposed increase in the fiscal 1983 budget would finance not poverty programs but Reagan's military buildup. And the money for vaccination programs, admitted Dale, would not be increased even though the cost of vaccine is rising.

Reagan: "On balance, the Soviet Union does have a definite margin of superiority [in nuclear arms]." (March 31)

Truth: Gen. David C. Jones, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, has said that he would not swap the American defense establishment for the Soviet one. Secretary of Defense Caspar Weinberger recently told Congress that the U.S. arms buildup was intended "to prevent the Soviet Union from acquiring . . . superiority." When Dean Fisher of the State Department was asked whether Reagan really believed the Russians were "superior," he responded that the President had actually said they had a "margin of superiority." According to the International Institute for Strategic Studies, the United States could deliver 9,000 warheads in a nuclear exchange to the Soviet Union's 7,000.

Reagan: In his five-minute radio broadcast on April 10, Reagan said that students have been deliberately misled and "incited to stage protest demonstrations against what has been called 'Draconian cuts' in student aid." Added the President: "We haven't cut loans. We've cut the cost to taxpayers of making these loans available."

Truth: O.M.B. spokesman Dale later admitted that the Reagan proposal would reduce government subsidies for student loans, raise the cost to the student and decrease the number of loans available. For example: the amount of funds for "Pell grants" would fall from $2.2 billion to $1.4 billion and the number of eligible students would decline from 2.2 million to 1.8 million; students would have to pay an "origination fee"—an advance payment on the interest charge of the loan—of 10 percent, double the previous amount.

Reagan: The President told a class of schoolchildren in mid-April that unemployment *declined* by 88,000 in March.

Truth: The Bureau of Labor Statistics reported that unemployment *rose* in March by 98,000—to 9 percent of the work force. Reagan was referring to raw figures before they were "seasonally adjusted" by the B.L.S. to discount such influences as holidays, weather and student influx into the job market.

Reagan: Asked his views on gun control, President Reagan on April 15 told of a British law under which "a criminal with a gun, even if he was arrested for burglary, was tried for first-degree murder and hanged if found guilty."

Truth: A member of the Law Society in Britain said the President's comment was untrue. There was a law that provided for execution for the *using* of guns that led to death, but not merely for the *carrying* of guns. A *New York Times* search of English law back to the fourteenth century failed to turn up the legal standard the President mentioned.

Reagan: On April 18 the President told reporters that "the leader of Ground Zero does not believe in the freeze. A freeze, yes, but after, as we've said so many times, a verifiable, substantial reduction to bring us down to parity and at a reduced number."

Truth: Roger Molander, the head of Ground Zero, said that "the President really misrepresents my position on the freeze." Though he has not taken a position on the freeze proposal, Molander disagrees with Reagan's view that the Soviet Union possesses nuclear superiority over the United States.

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ARTICLES.

OUR MAN IN GRENADA

The Case of the Menacing Runway

CHRISTOPHER HITCHENS

The Reagan Administration can sponsor Pinochet. It can cooperate with Duvalier. It can even live with d'Aubuisson. But it draws the line at Maurice Bishop, the Prime Minister of the 110,000 people of Grenada. Not only is his regime subject to economic sanctions by the United States and accused of the most astonishingly inventive subversive designs but it is also commanded to become a model democracy overnight. "Pluralism," so often undermined and derided elsewhere in Central America, is considered a sine qua non for revolutionary regimes. Just as the State Department calls the Caribbean a "backyard" when it is talking to its own citizens and a "basin" when it is wooing local potentates, so poor Grenada is judged by democratic criteria only when it starts talking about socialism.

Most press accounts of Grenada leave you with the impression that it is ruled by a regime of dark glasses and steel helmets—a regime, moreover, that is building an air base for Cuban use (an accusation that has been made on the record by Alexander Haig). Often it's very difficult to separate truth from fiction in allegations of this kind. But in the Grenadan case, life is made easy for the inquiring visitor. I spent some time on the island recently and can say confidently that there is not a shred of truth in what the State Department says.

Until 1979, Grenada was the sort of society that might have been designed by Jeane Kirkpatrick in her spare time. For the mass of the people, life alternated between sweltering peonage and unemployment. Dissent, which was vocal, was put down in blood by a force of charmers known as the Mongoose Gang. These were the private police of Eric Gairy, a mini-Duvalier who believed in voodoo fetishes and who astonished the United Nations by calling for an International U.F.O. Year.

Torture and murder of Gairy's opponents was commonplace. The knack of creating "disappeareds" was also being acquired by the police—perhaps because they were advised by a detachment of Chilean DINA officers. Illiteracy and disease seemed part of the natural order, and most talented Grenadans as well as many poor and desperate ones took to emigration, and are now stoking the boilers in London and Brooklyn. But there was a nominal Parliament, presided over by a man in a wig who had thoughtfully been provided by the departing British colonial regime. The Gairy outfit, then, by the Reagan definition, was authoritarian rather than totalitarian.

On March 13, 1979, while Gairy was out of the country, there was a revolution. The leaders of the New Jewel Movement (Jewel is an acronym for Joint Endeavor for Welfare, Education and Liberation) seized the radio station and broadcast a successful call for insurrection. Since then, Grenada has taken impressive steps away from backwardness. They include a widespread literacy campaign; the provision of free education and welfare and health services; equal pay and equal legal status for women; disclosure of company accounts by managers to workers; and a tourism code that says no hotel can be built higher than a palm tree.

The real problem is with the country's infrastructure. Grenadan capital was wholly parasitic under Gairy and never invested a cent. Grenada relies almost completely on the export of nutmeg and cocoa, both of which have had the bottom removed from their market price in the last two years. They are exported raw, in any case, so the construction of a processing factory is a great priority. Meanwhile, the United States has pointedly excluded the island from all of the aid provisions of the "Caribbean Basin Initiative" and has labeled the construction of a new international airport—one of the few projects that resolutely unites Grenadan business with the Bishop government—an aggressive act. Resources are thus stretched painfully thin, as some people intend them to be. This picture is hardly brightened when mercenaries, filmed and interviewed in Florida, announce their intention of mopping up Grenada along with Nicaragua.

The example of the airport is illustrative. Even under the Gairy regime, it was agreed on all sides that the island needed a modern, or at least an effective, port of entry. At present, the only such port is a short and narrow strip on the other side of the island from the capital. It is approached on land by a winding, mountainous road and by air only via Barbados, a country which resents tourists only "passing through" and makes them feel it. It has no night landing facilities and no runways to handle large jet planes. This inhibits not only tourism, obviously, but exports and imports. There could hardly be a clearer case for concentrating on one project as a means of overcoming the island's underdevelopment. Aid for the new airport has come from the European Common Market, from the Arab world and from Venezuela (even though the Reagan Administration claims Venezuela would be attacked if the airport ever became operational). Labor and technical advice is supplied by Cuba. The length of the runway, which the State Department claims to find so menacing, will be 9,000 feet. The runway length at the airport on Guadeloupe is 11,500 feet. It is 11,000 feet on Barbados and Curaçao, and 9,000 feet on St. Lucia. If some of these countries undergo a lurch to the left in the future (and few are immune from the prospect), the United States will be in the absurd position of having to tell them that their airport runways also are too long.

Christopher Hitchens is a contributing editor of The Nation.

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Obviously, the issue here is not Grenada's airport but its political system. It argues—doesn't it?—a morbid lack of confidence on the part of the U.S. government that it should fear such a small and impoverished island republic.

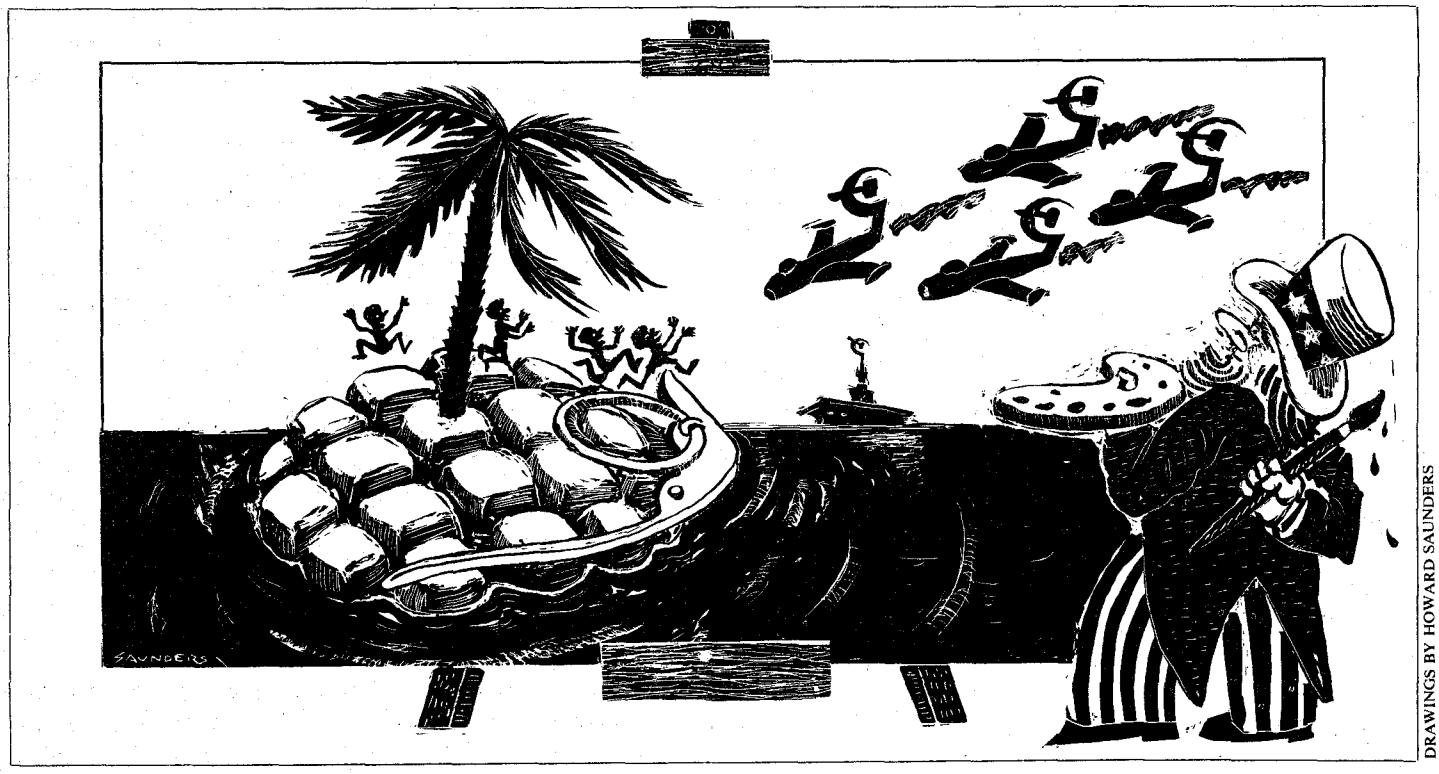
There's no doubt that the New Jewel Movement is led by convinced revolutionary socialists who associate their cause with that of the Sandinists and the Salvadoran guerrillas. They also enjoy very warm fraternal relations with Cuba. They are engaged in the business of building an economy from the bottom up. "Nationalization" hardly comes into it—there is no infrastructure to nationalize, and it has been up to the new regime to open a bank to stimulate savings, to create a fishing fleet and to try to diversify the produce of the country while continuing its traditional exports of nutmeg and cocoa. In this arduous process, political pluralism has been relegated and "people's democracy" is seen purely as an instrument for mobilizing the people for development. Popular enthusiasm is high—especially for the airport. But when one has disposed of the Reagan/Haig saber-rattling arguments, one is still left with the issue of political freedom.

I had the chance to hear Maurice Bishop talk about this in person. He is a highly intelligent and dedicated man, very fluent and persuasive. Considering that he himself was seriously injured by Gairy's secret police, and remembering that his father was murdered by them, he is remarkably without rancor. Almost all the 300 political prisoners of the old regime have been released. None of them bear any marks of ill treatment. About thirteen, all of them regarded as unrepentant, are still awaiting trial. On balance, compared with other regimes—and bearing in mind the recurrent threats made by outsiders against Grenada and the terror bombings that took place at a rally not long ago—this isn't too bad.

Bishop has been deeply impressed, however, by the fates of Salvador Allende and Michael Manley. They played by the democratic rules, he argues, and they were disposed of and their governments "destabilized" anyway. It's common to hear New Jewel members say that if you stand in the middle of the road, you get run down. A large part in destabilization was played by *El Mercurio* in Chile and the *Daily Gleaner* in Jamaica. Bishop has learned this lesson rather too well. There is no independent press in Grenada today. It may be true that the papers he closed were receiving sinister subventions. They certainly were not very good newspapers and they did print, as I've ascertained from their files, a lot of lies. But the only newspapers on the island now are the party paper, the journal of the party's women's and other sections, and the paper of its armed forces. Grenadans have, in short, only the right to agree. (Most of them do, but that's not the point.)

Bishop advances other arguments in defense of his policy. He says that elections are meaningless when the mass of the people can't read—an argument which would surprise, say, the Communist Party of India. He says that grass-roots democracy is better than Westminster-style representation. But the local and parish assemblies in Grenada can only make public officials accountable—they can't challenge or change the government. At the moment, the New Jewel Movement leaders would be fairly certain of winning an election handsomely. When they came to power, they promised to hold one. Now, the fulfillment of that promise has been postponed until a new Constitution has been submitted to a referendum.

I asked Bishop what he thought of the situation in Poland, and he said he believed the country had been the object of an external destabilization campaign which had now been defeated. (Grenada also voted with the Soviet Union in



DRAWINGS BY HOWARD SAUNDERS

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the United Nations on the invasion of Afghanistan.) The United States may, as is so often argued, be pushing Bishop toward the Soviet and Cuban camp. But there isn't much doubt that, ideologically speaking, that's where he wants to go anyway. It's not the least of the crimes of those who ruined Chile under Allende that they discredited the idea of political democracy among some of the best people in Latin America and the Caribbean.

The general enthusiasm, the internationalism and the determination of the Grenadan people is an inspiring thing to witness. In a country which was simply denuded by capitalism, a real effort is being made to create a just and equitable system and to overcome the old Caribbean choice between deprivation and emigration. The small size of the island and its traditions of solidarity and village democracy will make sure that it remains a fairly open society. Most of the attacks made on it are hypocritical or just plain malevolent.

Obviously, the country has the right to defend itself and to choose its own friends. These rights should be upheld by sympathizers in more fortunate lands. But it would be a pity if Grenada joined the ranks of those Third World revolutionary states that have abolished illiteracy and yet try to limit or even determine what people shall read. Bishop is not obliged to hold elections at the command of Ronald Reagan. But he should do so for his own sake, before the enthusiasm on which he now relies becomes compulsory and therefore ineffective. □

ISRAEL'S QUIET ANNEXATION

The West Bank As Bantustan

LUCY KOMISAR

Hebron, West Bank

On the map of Israel put out by the Ministry of Industry, Trade and Tourism, there is no line separating the West Bank from Israel proper. A small caveat at the bottom of the sheet says, "This map is not an authority on international boundaries," but what it represents is indeed the policy of the government of Menachem Begin toward the occupied territory. The West Bank, once the ancient Hebrew kingdoms of Judea and Samaria, is held to be religiously and historically part of "Eretz Israel," the land of Israel—or, as Begin has taken to calling it, "Western Eretz Israel."

As part of its scarcely disguised goal of annexing the West Bank, Israel has recently stepped up its attacks on Palestinian leaders and has attempted either to force out the Arabs living here or to encourage them to leave through restrictive policies on economic activity, education, housing and political life. One example of that campaign can be seen here in the battle for Hebron, twenty-two miles south of Jerusalem.

Mustafa Natshi, acting mayor of Hebron, told me that Jewish settlers had attacked Arab schoolgirls, that they regularly threw rocks at Arabs' windows, that they had uprooted 1,000 olive trees belonging to two Arab families and that they had broken into the shop of an Arab quiltmaker and destroyed his machinery. All these have been confirmed. A correspondent from *Ha'aretz*, the most respected Hebrew daily, arrived at the scene of the settler-student clash and found blood on one girl's hand and the rest of the children crying hysterically. Shulamit Aloni, a member of the Knesset, reported seeing Jewish settlers throwing rocks at Arab houses. The military governor of the territory ruled that the uprooting of the trees had taken place and was illegal. And the quiltmaker showed to the press the damaged machinery from his shop, which the Israelis had wanted to take over and use as an entrance to an attached communal house.

That house is the center—and Hebron the symbol—of the efforts by the ultra-Orthodox Gush Emunim (Bloc of the Faithful) to establish a Jewish presence throughout the West Bank. Inside the two-story Ottoman-era stone building, where twenty families live, a young woman told me that Hebron was "as much a part of Israel as Haifa," and that Jews would never leave it. Outside, at a sandbag fortification, two Israeli soldiers and an armed settler stood guard with M-16s and Uzi machine guns, while other soldiers watched from posts atop nearby buildings.

The Gush Emunim also took over part of the great Hebron mosque, the Tomb of the Patriarchs, said to contain the burial places of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Joseph, a place holy to both Moslems and Jews. A few rooms have been cleared of Moslem prayer rugs and fitted with wood cabinets that hold the Torah scrolls. Soldiers stand guard there, too. A settler walking to the shrine carried an automatic rifle.

Some 23,000 Jews now live in eighty settlements on the West Bank, along with 800,000 Arabs. The first Jewish settlements, established under Labor Party governments, were located along the border with Jordan and were intended as a defense against attack, but the settlement policy was expanded substantially under Begin, and now the interior is dotted with new Jewish towns.

As much as 30 percent of the West Bank land has been taken by Israelis during the fourteen-year occupation. About half the confiscated property had been held by the Jordanian government; the rest had absentee owners, or was used communally for grazing or privately for growing crops.

To drum up Jewish nationalistic support, the Israeli government runs tours of the settlements. I booked one with Yossi Meshulam, a legal adviser in the Ministry of Agriculture. In Ariel, Meshulam stood at the barbed wire fence at the perimeter and pointed to the rolling landscape spotted with rocks. "They don't have anything here but olive trees," he said. He turned to the shells of new buildings that

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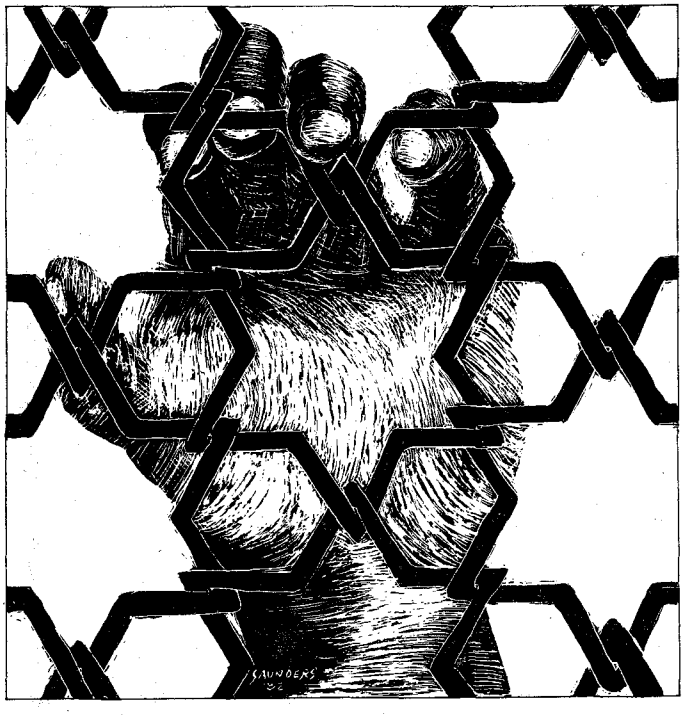
will house electronics and manufacturing plants: "This will benefit the Arab villages—they can work here."

The inexorable move toward annexation is a time bomb. Israel does not dare to make West Bank Palestinians citizens because, added to the Arab population in Israel itself, they would number 1.8 million, compared with 3.2 million Jews. With their higher birth rate, they would become a majority in just a few decades, and Israel would cease to be a Jewish state. Nor can it permanently maintain its occupation over the Arabs here, because that would increase international hostility to Israel, prolong Arab terrorist attacks and increase the likelihood of another war. And ultimately, the repressive measures required to maintain the occupation would corrode Israeli democracy.

About 3,000 Palestinians are already in Israeli jails for crimes ranging from throwing explosives and possession of weapons to membership in banned organizations. Four Arab newspapers are subject to stringent censorship, and three editors are under "town arrest," unable to go to their East Jerusalem offices. Bir Zeit University has frequently been closed in response to student demonstrations. Although university administrator Gaby Baramki says there has been "no problem in teaching, no direct interference" by authorities, it has been difficult for him to get work permits for some of the foreign professors who are a substantial part of his staff, and several hundred Arab books and journals have been banned at Bir Zeit (although many of these publications are available at Hebrew University in Jerusalem). A new regulation gives Israeli authorities the power to approve student admissions and faculty hiring.

Some expressions of resistance have been allowed. I saw a surprising example one night in Jericho, about six miles from the Allenby Bridge on the Jordanian border. A troupe of young actors from East Jerusalem who call themselves The Storyteller put on an agitprop farce in an old theater.



An Israeli soldier searches an Arab cafe and finds a stack of leaflets. He reads one aloud: "To our people who are struggling in all areas of occupied territory." The theatergoers cheered. Then the title character, Mahjoob Mahjoob, accepts a job in Israel, gets threatening notes denouncing his collaboration and finally quits. Loud applause.

The problem of Arabs having to work in Israel or for Israeli companies is a real one, as the play indicates. Some 50,000 Palestinians from the occupied territories, most of them unskilled, work in restaurant kitchens or on construction gangs or at one or another menial job. There is little work for them on the West Bank, which was deliberately left undeveloped during Jordanian rule. Today, Israel exploits the cheap labor and captured customers for its products. It discourages new indigenous Arab industry while aiding Jewish settlers who want to set up factories. The West Bank and Gaza have been absorbed into the Israeli economy, just a step away from political annexation. The Israeli settlements are already under Israeli law, not West Bank jurisdiction.

Labor Party critics have described the occupied territories as "Little Bantustans." The comparison is apt. And the lesson should be that such a system won't work for Israel any more than it does for South Africa. □

Union Democracy

(*Continued From Front Cover*)

allowed to "solicit or accept financial support, or any other direct or indirect support of any kind (except an individual's own volunteered personal time) from any non-member." Called the "outsider rule," the amendment effectively prevents Sadlowski or any other insurgent from raising the necessary resources to contest, let alone defeat, incumbent or administration-backed candidates.

When Sadlowski and others sued to have the rule declared illegal, two Federal courts agreed, finding violations of Title I of the Landrum-Griffin Act, the labor movement's Bill of Rights. The District Court called the rule "outrageous." A unanimous Appeals Court declared, "We cannot conceive of anything that would do more to inhibit union democracy. . . . [It] would leave union members practically at the mercy of every entrenched group of incumbents." Union officials appealed those decisions, and thus the case rests with the Supreme Court.

To see why a ban on outside contributions, if it is allowed to stand, represents such a threat to union democracy it is necessary to appreciate the overpowering scope of the measure and to understand the overwhelming domination of union political life by entrenched administrations.

As broad as any steel beam, the outsider rule proscribes all contributions from anyone not an active member of the steelworkers' union, including friends, neighbors, spouses,

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other relatives, retired union members (such as Sadlowski's father) and even those laid off for too long to remain union members in good standing. Not only could money not be donated, it couldn't even be loaned, except by a "regular commercial lending institution" at the going rate. Services, including "printing services, office supplies, office space, meeting space, mailing lists or other items," could not be provided without payment for their full market value, nor could credit be extended on other than "normal" terms. All fund-raising events, such as rallies, dinners, benefits and raffles, would assiduously have to exclude nonmembers. Even lawyers or other professionals giving their "volunteered time" would not have the right to use their "facilities, secretarial or staff help, office space or any other aid."

To make the ban impenetrable, a veritable thicket of implementing regulations requires candidates to comply with complex accounting and reporting procedures, placing on them a time-consuming burden of proof. The rule compels the disclosure of the name of every donor of more than a dollar, and it forbids the use of contributions, "pending verification of the status of the contributor." Indeed, in the words of one disgruntled Steelworker, "the only thing that's not in there is something telling me I have to get the O.K. to run from the union's president."

The rule is to be administered by a committee composed of three "distinguished, impartial citizens"—all of whom would be appointed by the union leadership. Violations could result not only in a candidate's disqualification but also in fines or suspension and even expulsion from the union.

To mount an effective campaign for high office in a union as large and geographically dispersed as the Steelworkers (with 1.3 million members in fifty states, Puerto Rico and Canada), vast resources are required—resources readily available to the administration through its control of the union's bureaucracy. Some 1,500 staff members, appointed by the president, normally provide the bulk of campaign financing for official candidates; in 1977, McBride received 90 percent of his funds from staff members, many of whom made payments of $500. (Some even paid in installments!) But the staff provides more than dependable financial backing. Along with the elected officers, it makes up the only political apparatus within the union, what one former union official calls "a ready-made campaign organization . . . the political foot soldiers of the Official Family." The outsider rule would not affect the campaign activities of staff members, who are members of the steelworkers' union.

The administration enjoys other advantages as well. The union newspaper routinely carries publicity favorable to incumbents or their policies, unfavorable to challengers. The entire nomination and election machinery is in the hands of the officers, as is the postelection appeals procedure. The union's lists of members, locals and polling sites are all under administration control. While the officers are legally required to provide at least some of these resources to insurgents, their ability to delay is great. And if an insurgent gets so far as to challenge the administration in court, the officials can rely on the union's legal staff—also union members—who can easily set aside their union-related work to aid the efforts of the officials.

It was, in fact, Sadlowski's success in getting that far which prompted the rule in the first place. Sadlowski did receive a considerable portion of his campaign contributions—80 percent—from supporters outside the union. None of the contributions came from corporate employers or from the union's treasury, sources prohibited by union and civil law; rather, they came from the same liberal, pro-labor constituencies that had backed the struggles waged by the Farmworkers and the insurgent Miners for Democracy movement in the United Mine Workers of America.

More important, a substantial amount of legal assistance had been donated, primarily in an effort to insure a fair election and prevent a repetition of Sadlowski's 1973 "defeat" in a district race at the hands of an administration opponent. (The Department of Labor sued to overturn the election on the grounds of massive voter fraud, and in a government-supervised rerun, Sadlowski won by a two-to-one margin.) In fact, if the outsider rule was aimed at an immediate target other than Sadlowski, it was Joe Rauh, the formidable labor and civil liberties attorney. For little or no remuneration, Rauh and others gave unstintingly of their professional resources to help safeguard Sadlowski's rights. They filed numerous successful suits aimed at securing Sadlowski equal treatment in the union newspaper and

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equal access to polling and tallying information, and in one case prevented the administration from illegally declaring one of his running mates ineligible. The outsider rule would certainly cripple similar efforts in the future.

To offset the enormous advantages of incumbency even minimally, such support was essential. In 1977, neither candidate received much financial support from the rank and file. Incumbents usually don't, and usually don't need it. Insurgents generally have a hard enough time convincing members to contribute votes—let alone dollars—to an underdog campaign. To become at least a viable candidate to begin with, where can an insurgent turn in order to—in the words of the Appeals Court—"amass the resources necessary for effective advocacy"? Sadlowski turned outside. Like the labor movement itself, he looked to allies among those who believe in justice, equality and a fair shake.

Attempts to link Sadlowski's court challenge with recent right-to-work assaults on union prerogatives fall flat when it is recognized that Joe Rauh himself has been prominent in labor's defense on that front. So, too, do attempts to link the outsider rule with the Supreme Court's recent decision in *Finnegan* v. *Leu*. In that case the new head of a Teamsters local dismissed the staff members appointed by a prior administration, an action which the Supreme Court upheld. As that ruling effectively validates a common form of union political retaliation, it obviously has significance for the future of union democracy. But the issue is complicated by the legitimate need of a new administration to employ a staff that will enact its program, an issue not involved in *Sadlowski*.

Finnegan ironically points up one obvious solution in *Sadlowski*. For if the steelworkers' union is seriously concerned with the use of outside contributions, it could remove much of the need for them by barring its staff from campaigning and contributing to elections. Even lesser restrictions—setting limits on all contributions, for instance—would mitigate what union officials claim is the illness, without, as in the case of the outsider rule, killing the patient.

But Steelworkers officials and their supporters insist not only that the rule be upheld but that it was wrong to challenge it in the first place. Indeed, they feel it is wrong to "go to the government" to redress any grievance, even when there seems to be no other recourse. As I. W. Abel once declared, "Trade unionists should resolve their differences within the union rather than going through the courts." When asked if this was valid "even though there was ballot-box stuffing," Abel replied: "Correct."

Such an attitude is itself a serious threat to the labor movement and flies squarely in the face of labor's own calls for coalition and support. The attempt to deprive workers of the protections of the law and the assistance of allies serves only the interests of entrenched autocracy. As one observer declared, the outsider rule "would gravely damage, if not destroy, the possibility of democratic elections in unions." □

UNION DEMOCRACY AT STAKE—II

Should the Courts Determine Policy?

JULES BERNSTEIN AND LAURENCE E. GOLD

The two union democracy cases that the Supreme Court has considered this year pointedly demonstrate the problems that arise in the labor movement when defeated union candidates turn to Federal courts to challenge membership decisions. And, more pointedly still, they call into question some superficial attitudes about union democracy.

The *Sadlowski* case is the politically charged outgrowth of the intense struggle for the presidency of the steelworkers' union in 1977. That campaign received heavy media attention, largely because Ed Sadlowski offered a strong left candidacy in a major industrial union and actively sought publicity, support and money from individuals outside the Steelworkers and the labor movement itself.

Lloyd McBride won the election, and one of his most effective campaign issues was Sadlowski's reliance upon "outsider" contributions. In fact, about 80 percent of Sadlowski's campaign funds came from non-Steelworkers; about 90 percent of McBride's money came from the union's staff. Ironically, then, neither candidate had much rank-and-file financial support. But the influx of outsider money triggered a broad debate over the advisability and legality of nonmember contributions, and at the Steelworkers' 1978 convention, 4,227 elected local union delegates approved by a ten-to-one margin the "outsider rule" amendment.

Sadlowski sued, challenging the rule (though not the amendment procedure), and a Federal Appeals Court decided that the rule conflicted with the "free speech" section of the Landrum-Griffin Act—because, the court said, it could prevent insurgents from amassing enough money to campaign effectively. The case is now before the Supreme Court, with the focus on the meaning of these statutory free speech rights.

Sadlowski, however, also wants the Court to declare that the First Amendment itself applies directly to the Steelworkers. He argues that unions are so heavily regulated that they are legally indistinguishable from the government and that union members therefore have the same constitutional rights in their unions that citizens have vis-à-vis their government. The lower courts rejected this view, but Supreme Court approval of it could revolutionize labor law and open unions to unforeseeable responsibilities, liabilities and expenses. Indeed, the right-wing National Right to Work Legal Defense Foundation has recently pressed this

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same theory with alarming success in several lawsuits challenging union political expenditures.

Although Sadlowski's argument rests on his contention that union incumbents wield excessive political power and can coerce financial backing from their appointees, only a third of the members of the Steelworkers staff contributed to McBride, and the staff's own collective bargaining agreement with the union protects them against retaliation for positions taken in union elections. In any event, the union's 1.3 million rank-and-file members—dwarfing the 1,500 or so staff members—are protected by Landrum-Griffin from reprisals for campaign activities.

In fact, the Steelworkers' own recent history includes two vigorous campaigns against incumbent presidents in which nonunion money was an insignificant factor. The first, then-secretary-treasurer I.W. Abel's campaign in 1965, succeeded; the second, little-known Steelworkers staff lawyer Emil Narick's campaign in 1969, garnered 40 percent of the vote. Moreover, when elections are overturned because of irregularities or misconduct, such as Sadlowski's district race in 1973, it does not follow that outside financial support would—or should—have made a difference.

Because it is Ed Sadlowski's lawsuit, his position is attractive to some. But had the recipient of outside largesse been an ardent right-to-worker benefiting from right-wing contributors, the outsider rule might well be hailed by its current opponents. To be sure, some outside influences pose greater threats than others, and the Steelworkers' rule is a relatively radical measure; the union might instead have imposed contribution limits or disclosure requirements. But the critical point is that unions should have the freedom to try any of these approaches, or none at all.

The same point is raised in *Finnegan* v. *Leu*. That case began when Harold Leu defeated incumbent Omar Brown for the leadership of a Teamsters local in Ohio and, as his first official act, replaced most of Brown's appointed business agents with his own. The discharged agents sued under Landrum-Griffin, seeking reinstatement and back pay, claiming they were fired only because of their loyalty to Brown. The union in this instance argues that any rule that would protect appointed staff members from being discharged is the antithesis of union democracy, as it could freeze into office agents of a discredited regime. (Union appointees are protected in any event by general civil rights statutes.) Fortunately, in last week's decision the Supreme Court strongly agreed, holding that "the ability of an elected union president to select his own administrators is an integral part of insuring the union administration's responsiveness to the mandate of the union election." Indeed, any abuse of appointive authority should be remedied at the next election and lawsuits which seek to frustrate this process merely serve to drain union treasuries and prevent change of any sort.

Some on the left disagree. Two briefs submitted to the Supreme Court—one by the Association for Union Democracy and others, one by the National Labor Law Center of the National Lawyers Guild—urged that courts undertake complex factual inquiries whenever disgruntled union appointees contest their discharges, weighing such factors as union interests, officer motivation and the nature of the behavior that precipitated the discharge. Luckily these legal theories did not prevail, for that would have turned union staff changes into litigative minefields, with Federal courts rather than union members determining union policy. Democratic principles are best served by leaving to each union's members, not to judicial fiat, the power to run their internal affairs—including the right of a newly elected president to discharge agents loyal to a defeated administration.

In both *Finnegan* and *Sadlowski*, the lesson about judicial interference with union democracy seems to be clear. Since the Supreme Court last considered a Landrum-Griffin case more than five years ago, internal union litigation has sharply increased as plaintiffs and their lawyers have tried to establish broad interpretations of the law. Unfortunately, the debate within unions and the labor bar has not kept pace with the lawsuits. And when internal struggles are fought in the courts rather than in union halls, political biases and preconceptions often obscure the underlying issues, and responsibility over union policy is transferred from union members to Federal judges who often lack trade union sympathies.

Those who seek judicial limitations on internal union choices may be demonstrating their distrust of union members to make decisions. Unions ought to be able to guarantee that their officials are selected by the membership and empowered to implement policies for which they are accountable. Trade unionists who cast about for legal theories to avoid or undo the consequences of the democratic process would be better advised to appeal to their fellow members, not to the Federal courts, and to consider what sort of freedom of action for their unions they will need if and when they are elected. □

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FOLLOW-UP.

THAT 'RUNAWAY CONVENTION'

Why Not Take Another Look at The Constitution?

SANFORD LEVINSON

Lawrence M. Baskir is the latest person to add his voice to the cry against the prospect of a constitutional convention to consider a balanced budget amendment ["The Dangers of a 'Runaway Convention,' " *The Nation*, April 3]. The central concern is that a convention could go well beyond that specific issue and propose amendments on any topic at all.

On the premise that a proposal that draws the opposition of all mainstream opinion (and on this issue *The Nation* joins *The New York Times* in the mainstream) cannot be all bad, I have tried to imagine what might be said in favor of such a convention, independent of one's views on the balanced budget amendment, which is currently before Congress anyway. There is a surprising amount to be said in its favor, and it ill behooves those of us on the left to make an eminently sensible project—reflective reconsideration, in 1982, of the merits of a set of political understandings drafted mainly in 1787—the province of the right.

Thomas Jefferson, we might recall, supported not only a revolution every generation but also, more moderately and perhaps more sensibly, periodic review of the extent to which the Constitution was serving the interests of the living. His close friend and colleague James Madison rejected Jefferson's analysis, arguing that it was vitally important to achieve stability by inculcating an attitude of veneration toward the Constitution; that veneration would be retarded if the people were encouraged to think that the Constitution might be imperfect. Baskir—and everyone else whose automatic response is to emphasize the dangers of a convention—is very much in the Madisonian tradition, for his ultimate premise seems indeed to rest on an almost thoughtless veneration of the Constitution.

First things first: How dangerous would a "runaway convention" be? Baskir answers the question himself by pointing out that any amendments proposed by a convention would have to be submitted to the states and be approved by three fourths—thirty-eight—of them before they would become legally binding. The Equal Rights Amendment fiasco should remind us how difficult it is to get such approval: an enormous advantage is held by those who oppose any amendment, for they need only capture one house of thirteen states in order to prevent its passage. Yes, it is possible that a convention would propose the repeal of the First Amendment, the reinstitution of slavery and who knows what else. But it defies credibility to believe that this country is so far gone as to accept a radical overthrow of its fundamental traditions. If it *is* so far gone, then it will take only a few more years to stack the judiciary with men and women who will read such pernicious views into the Constitution. And at that point we will see the vindication of another one of Madison's notions—the inability of "parchment barriers" to prevent an organized majority faction from having its evil way.

Putting fevered fantasies aside, then, let us look at some of the advantages of a convention. Congress is patently unable to consider the Constitution as a whole, given the crushing burdens of its regular agenda. The best we can hope for from Congress is responsiveness to essentially marginal issues. But, especially if we do indeed venerate the Constitution, might we not wish to subject it to close analysis and collective deliberation? What better way to celebrate the Constitution's bicentennial than a great national debate about its continuing cogency?

Edgar Z. Friedenberg, writing in *The Nation* about the recent attempts to draft a Canadian Constitution ["The Struggle for Human Rights," March 20], pointed to the benefits that came from national consideration of the Canadian bill of rights. Indeed, it turned out that the populace at large was more willing to protect civil liberties than were the initial Constitution drafters. Perhaps a lesson is to be learned here, particularly by those of us who purport to trust the people and to be suspicious of the claims of elite "experts."

What might we wish, as a collective whole, to discuss at a constitutional convention? I shall mention just a few examples. A number of observers, including former White House counsel Lloyd Cutler, have questioned whether we are well served by a conception of separation of powers that prevents a President from appointing sitting members of Congress to the Cabinet. A semiparliamentary system, it has been argued, would check at least somewhat the current drift toward an almost Fourth Republic-like *immobilisme*. Moreover, it is, to put it mildly, an open question whether we benefit from a fixed Presidential term that makes impeachment the only alternative to suffering Presidents who have lost the capacity to lead, whether because of rank incompetence or venality. It is patently not true that our version of separation of powers is necessary to maintain some measure of democracy, since no other major nation in the world, including those that all of us would presumably recognize as democratic, has found it necessary to adopt such a structure. One can imagine far worse things than a "runaway convention" willing to address these issues seriously.

But it may be argued that such examples miss the point, that a convention is all too likely to attack the Bill of Rights.

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My response would be: perhaps not all of the Bill of Rights serves us particularly well, and we should have the courage to examine the first ten amendments rather than simply venerate them. Certainly most of us have little esteem for the Second Amendment, which *can* be read as the National Rifle Association wishes it to be; but of course most of us do not regard the Second Amendment as part of the "real" Bill of Rights. So take the Fifth Amendment and its guarantee against self-incrimination. I confess to being unable to understand the allure of this amendment, for it works to prohibit far more than physical or psychological pressure for a confession or the interrogation of people regarding their political beliefs or associations. One can support these prohibitions—by preventing all out-of-court interrogation, for example—without accepting the general premise of a right to remain silent. Indeed, I would argue that one huge cost of the Fifth Amendment has been to make us insufficiently protective of much more important Fourth Amendment rights against invasive searches or infiltration by secret agents. However, once one concedes, as I do, the general legitimacy of society's being able to gather at least some evidence of crimes committed against its members, then the question becomes what we allow; and the fact that the framers thought the Fifth Amendment was a good thing does not require that we adhere to their views without further examination.

Those shocked by my dismissal of the framers' wisdom will, I suspect, be more sympathetic to my next example. The clause of the Constitution forbidding states to pass any law "impairing the obligation of contracts" (Article I, Section 10) blocks the adoption of debtor relief and similar legislation. Indeed, the Supreme Court in 1978 relied on that clause in invalidating a Minnesota law designed to protect the pension rights of workers for a company that was closing its Minnesota plant; and in 1977, in ruling against a modification of a pledge by the New York Port Authority not to use its funds to support mass transit. It may well be that these decisions were "correct" as matters of constitutional interpretation; still, the contract clause does not serve our country well today. One could only commend a convention willing to consider its repeal.

The point is that the Constitution is not a menu of self-evidently good things but a document and set of understandings that structures our political lives for ill as well as good. If the thirty-eighth state does endorse a convention, we should not recoil in fright but instead make every effort to assure that state legislatures send thoughtful men and women to it. If we on the left simply concede the convention to the right, then of course it will turn into the horror show that Baskir and others predict. But we should not only take the prospect of a convention seriously, we should welcome it, albeit with fear and trembling. For it would give us the opportunity to define what kind of country we wish to be and to determine whether our current structure of government allows us to be that country. If we do not ultimately trust our fellow citizens to rise to such an occasion, then we should accept the demise of our experiment in self-government. I prefer to think otherwise. □

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Just-So Stories

TABITHA M. POWLEDGE

THE SEX CONTRACT: The Evolution of Human Behavior. *By Helen E. Fisher. William Morrow and Company. 253 pp. $13.50.*

MAN, THE PROMISING PRIMATE. *By Peter J. Wilson. Yale University Press. 185 pp. $12.95.*

THE WOMAN THAT NEVER EVOLVED. *By Sarah Blaffer Hrdy. Harvard University Press. 255 pp. $17.50.*

Once upon a time, millions of years ago, there was a female ape so sexy she was able to inveigle male apes into hanging around to help with the groceries and the kids, thus inventing fatherhood, kinship systems and Homo sapiens.

This, in amalgam and in brief, is the fairy tale spun by these books. Along with some of their predecessors and what will doubtless be a number of successors, they ruminate on aspects of the question of where we came from. Despite the fact that each of their authors comes at the subject from a different theoretical perspective, and despite the fact that their content, emphases and intended audiences differ, their arguments are to some degree complementary.

For one thing, they all postulate the centrality of the female role in human evolution, an idea unheard-of only a decade ago, when the notion of male bonding was accorded pride of place in the human story. Not that this means the messages of these books will meet with universal huzzahs in feminist circles, as we shall see.

In fact, Helen Fisher's thesis is a semiscientific version of an ancient and universal male lament, the one that holds that the only reason a woman comes across is to secure a permanent meal ticket for herself and her endlessly demanding brood. Analysis from the woman's point of view would, of course, see the battle of the sexes somewhat differently: she is forced to come across because he will withhold sustenance if she does not, and she cannot provide for herself and the aforesaid brood alone.

The Sex Contract grew out of Fisher's doctoral dissertation in anthropology, in which she asked why human females had abandoned the primate (indeed, mammalian) pattern of estrus, or heat, a well-defined but relatively brief period in which the female is interested—usually *very* interested—in sex. In most species, this is the only time she permits it, the only time she can become pregnant and also the only time males display any enthusiasm for sexual activity.

The notion of continuous sexual receptivity in human females is generally good for a few derisive hoots from some males, who have presumably found the notion not universally applicable. Individual cases of frustration aside, the fact is that human females can, and do, have sex and enjoy it not just around the time of ovulation but at any time in the menstrual cycle. From nature's point of view, having sex when no pregnancy is on the horizon is a waste unless the act is serving some other function. Fisher is not the first to argue that the function involves attracting and holding a man so that the woman and her children will be provided for.

Why was this necessary, since virtually all other primate females feed and care for their offspring with little help from males? And indeed, males can be dangerous to infants, especially the infants of a deposed, formerly dominant rival, which are not infrequently murdered by the new leader.

Fisher argues that the need for male help was a consequence of the upright, bipedal stance our ancestors developed about four million years ago and of the subsequent increase in brain size. The fetal brain, in fact, grew too large to pass through the birth canal, and natural selection thus favored earlier birth, with substantial brain growth taking place afterward. The result was a premature, extremely dependent infant who needed far more care than its newborn ape and monkey relations. (A human infant could not cling to and ride its mother as an infant chimp does, even if the mother had hair for it to cling to.)

In addition, human childhood is much longer than the childhood of other primates. Thus rearing a human child requires not only intensive parental investment at the outset but also a long-term commitment. Mother needed help. And she found it in the sex contract. Evolution selected for females who liked to have sex outside of estrus, when pregnant, even when nursing, because a female who could keep a male hanging around was better off. Evolution also selected for males who were inclined to share food and care for offspring, and thus the nuclear family was born.

Peter Wilson is a social anthropologist who wants to raise the consciousness of his biologically-oriented colleagues about the importance of behavior, especially cultural behavior, in the story of human evolution. To help his case, he uses the literature on monkey and ape behavior and the paleontological record of the ape and human lines, which is normally the province of physical, not social, anthropology. But he argues, quite sensibly, that social institutions are as much the inventions of human beings as are the tools of material culture. The fact that these institutions do not leave behind physical remains to be examined by subsequent generations is, he thinks, irrelevant.

Wilson's title, *Man, The Promising Primate*, is an intentional pun. Human beings are promising in the sense that they are the most versatile members of the primate order (itself a group of unusually versatile mammals that have adopted a variety of ways of making a living). He argues that this lack of specialization threw our ancestors into stiff competition with their primate relatives and with other mammals as well; it forced them to leave Africa about a million years ago in search of resources not already being exploited by other animals. (All primates but one are tropical creatures; we are the only one—indeed, the only animal of any kind—that lives everywhere on the planet, in every clime.)

Wilson introduces the second sense in which human beings are promising in

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an intricate argument to which brief summation does an injustice: human sexiness led to the bonded male-female pair, all right, but that created problems because the female already had a prior, primary bond, to her infant. It thus became necessary for her to offer a guarantee that when she turned her attention to one of them, she would before long shift that attention back to the other. This initial promising was then extended to other relationships, especially those of kinship, and it is on promises of this kind, which require self-consciousness, intelligence and an acknowledged kinship system, that human social structure rests. Here Wilson's argument is shaky, in part because most other primates also have intense relationships in addition to the one between mother and child.

Sarah Hrdy, a primate ethologist, accepts the possibility that female sexiness may have ulterior motives, but she elaborates on and reinterprets the old bargain to argue that promiscuity, not monogamy, is what females want. In *The Woman That Never Evolved*, she shows that for female monkeys and apes (and perhaps early women), some degree of sleeping around has always been the norm. Because she is also a sociobiologist, Hrdy offers a genetic interpretation of this behavior. The real payoff from loss of estrus is hidden ovulation—a fertile period divested of the obvious sexual signals such as the florid genital swelling of female chimpanzees. One result of hidden ovulation is that it creates uncertainty as to which male is the biological father of a particular infant; a female who copulates with many males may persuade each of them that he might be the father of her offspring. She can thereby secure a measure of parental investment from several males, not just one.

In demonstrating that the female role in social structure and primate evolution is a critical one, Hrdy wants to show that females are in constant competition with one another for scarce resources. Like the female role in general, female competition has been ignored in analyses of primate studies, in part, she believes, because the female style of competition rarely includes the overt aggression characteristic of males. The female style is more subtle, especially in the way it allows dominant females to interfere with the reproductive lives (and therefore, in sociobiological terms, with the only kind of success that counts, genetic success) of the less dominant.

Competition between females is really the central subject of Hrdy's book, a competition that extends, she believes, beyond monkeys and apes to our own species, although, as she points out, few studies have been done to confirm or disprove it. ("How do you measure," she asks, "a sweetly worded put-down?") That "feminist ideal of a sex less egotistical, less competitive by nature, less interested in dominance" is the nonexistent sex to which her title refers.

Since Hrdy is a feminist, the message is a discouraging one for her, as well as for many of her readers. She knows that specialists in her field often deserve the charges of sexism which are thrown at them. But she also believes there is nothing to be gained by myth-making, by pretending the hard-won gains of the women's movement will simply return us to a feminist version of the good old days.

All of these books, and others of the genre, are examples of what Stephen Jay Gould, in criticizing sociobiological writings, has called Just-So Stories. They are fairy tales, ones with something of an empirical base, but still offered (in these three cases explicitly) as hypotheses, models, at best partial truths. (Wilson even denies that his is a model, preferring to call it a speculation.)

The fact that they appear to rest on data may obscure their nature as fables. Data can be incomplete. The paleontological record is sparse; some gaps will eventually be filled, but it will never be complete. And data can be wrong. Wilson appears to be mistaken about sexiness being a defining human characteristic; Hrdy makes a plausible case for its occurrence in many other primates.

In addition, data mean nothing by themselves. Data require interpretation, and interpretation is a pretty subjective business. Fisher and Hrdy use exactly the same data—the fact that among primates, rape has been observed in human beings and orangutans—to imply that rape is common (Fisher) or rare (Hrdy). Hrdy draws on "new" data about primate behavior (virtually all field studies on wild primates have been conducted in the last decade or two), but the richness and novelty of her analysis stem from the way she looks at the raw information; other commentators, looking at the same set of facts, have drawn different conclusions. Behavior is in the eye of the beholder.

The problem such fairy tales create—not altogether of their making—is that they will be taken for gospel. *The Sex Contract* is the most likely of the three books to receive an uncritical reception. Although it is thin by comparison with the other two, its style is titillating, and it is clearly aimed at an audience that will be unlikely to grasp that it *is* a fairy tale. Its obvious message—that humanity got its start because female apes peddled themselves to male apes (talk about the oldest profession)—will be taken up by people who enjoy adding to the hostilities in the battle of the sexes.

Wilson's book, although densely written and occasionally obscure, is valuable because it holds out an olive branch to warring factions and, while generously and for the most part knowledgeably conceding the importance of biology, reminds biological anthropologists of the importance of nonmaterial culture to the human story.

Hrdy's book is unusually well written for a work by an American scientist. It also places an enormous amount of scientific information, intriguing in its own right, into a social and political context, while pointing out that feminism need not, as it so often appears to do, fear biology.

Both Hrdy's and Wilson's books are the products of university presses and therefore likely to reach a more sophisticated and presumably skeptical audience than *The Sex Contract*, but they still present the problem of determining the ratio of truth to fiction. Stories like these may be closer to the literal truth about human beginnings than Genesis, but they are works of imagination as well. The authors understand that, but how many readers will?

The appetite for stories of human origin is vast in most human cultures, but nowhere more so than in our own. Movies like *Quest for Fire* capitalize on this interest. Although *Quest for Fire* gets some things wrong—fire was in use at least three quarters of a million years ago, much longer than the 80,000 years the movie specifies, and the missionary position, presented as the sine qua non of humanness, has often been observed in other primates—it is nevertheless an elaborate and even careful attempt to explore the subject of our origins seriously.

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It is doubtful we shall ever know the story of our origins in detail. The fact is that an ape or monkey model can be found to support just about any theory of human behavior. If there is a hint of truth to be found anywhere about the nature of human nature, it emerges from reading several works of this genre rather than a single one. Taken together, especially in their disagreements, they make a convincing case that our primate heritage has endowed us with unprecedented versatility, that the limits biology sets for us are more flexible than they are anywhere else in nature. As a result, our social systems are plastic and amenable to political tinkering—a blessing, to be sure, but something of a curse as well, since we cannot therefore escape responsibility for the choices we make.

Indeed, the political choices we have made in the past forty years—and, with the resurgence of the antinuclear movement, the choices we may be making now—give this contemporary hunger to know human origins a special poignancy. □

Listen, Bookchin

ALAN WOLFE

THE ECOLOGY OF FREEDOM. *By Murray Bookchin. Cheshire Books. 385 pp. $19.95.*

We should have listened to Murray Bookchin. For two decades he has been warning us about what we are doing to our society and what we are doing to one another. His liberating vision of human potential has been as unwelcome to the managers of late capitalist society as it is to Marxists intent on using the means created by that society to overturn it. When I first read *Listen, Marxist*, Bookchin's scathing critique of revolutionary instrumentalism, I dismissed it as counterproductive. Having reread it in preparation for this review, I salute it as prophetic. Marxism's refusal to take the anarchist critique of power seriously is directly responsible for its current sterility.

If Marxism has become sclerotic and obsessed with its own internal logic, capitalist thought as such has ceased to exist. Unlike the eighteenth century, when capitalism provided a passionate outlook on the world, defenders of today's mélange of state power, corporate privilege and militaristic temptation have been unable to offer any compelling intellectual justification. Perhaps it is no longer necessary. The power assembled by the institutions of modern society *is* their legitimation; they have inspired so much awe as a result of their capacity to wreck human lives that they have created a widespread passivity that makes the intellectual defense of privilege unnecessary.

Bookchin offers a radical critique of this society, one I wanted very much to hear. Yet, at the risk of ignoring his advice once again, I find myself unsympathetic to his vision of the past and therefore distrustful of his vision of the future. *The Ecology of Freedom* is so obsessive, dogmatic and angry that it will not win Bookchin the hearing he deserves.

One would have thought that the spread of "New Age" values in Western Europe and the United States would have been an encouraging sign for one of our most consistent ecological activists. Robert Rodale's New Age publishing complex reaches some 6 million readers every month. New Age bookstores have sprung up throughout the United States. Writers as diverse as Hazel Henderson, Fritjof Capra and Jerome Deshusses have told us of the possibility of moving beyond the instrumental reason of modern economics, physics and technology. Bookchin's time seems to have come. But it is not, evidently, within his nature to be satisfied with any of this. His latest book, which should be called *Listen, Environmentalist*, is as critical of vegetarianism and other New Age manifestations as his earlier books were of vanguardism and other Marxist-Leninist inspirations.

For a man who sings of sensuality and joy, Bookchin is filled with an implacable, almost puritanical, severity. To him, environmentalists have done little more than invent a new form of plunder. Since they still live off nature rather than with it, environmentalists, like the rest of us, have reversed the priorities that make true liberation possible. We cannot tinker with the course on which the earth is headed, says Bookchin; we have to alter that course radically. His suggestion is that we rediscover the secrets of preliterate society. In doing so, we will learn that freedom is a byproduct of domination. Hierarchy cannot be dissolved by carving out a "negative" sphere called freedom but by recreating the organic and harmonious societies of long ago (exactly when they existed is not made clear).

Charles Fourier, writes Bookchin, "was above all the advocate of *l'écart absolu*, the complete rejection of the conventions of his time." One can admire the same qualities in Bookchin. Yet now, at the very moment when we are caught, as Alain Touraine put it, between the gulag of the market and the gulag of the state, Bookchin's utopianism does not tell us what to do.

Although he claims that he is not romanticizing the past, and even though he suggests quite astonishingly that "we have no reason to be disenchanted by history," his account of the West's development is a tale of unrelenting woe. Except for a few bursts of liberation, progress has meant disaster:

> To emphasize the preeminence of contemporary society in history is, subtly, to elevate a deadening, homogenizing mass media over the spiritual yearning elicited by religious ceremonies, a mechanistic scientism over a colorful mythopoeic sensibility, and an icy indifference to the fate of one's immediate neighbors over a richly intertwined system of mutual aid.

I am no great fan of the modern world, but I do think that history develops the way it does for a reason, and one of the reasons preliterate societies, mythopoeic though they may have been, disappeared is that they deformed human potential. The history of modernity is the history of domination, to be sure, but it is also the history of capacity, as the very notion of literacy implies. In the eighteenth century, Bookchin's yearning for noble savages would have been called reactionary; in the twentieth century, it is called anarchism.

Bookchin's descriptions of the organic societies of the past are lyrical and learned, and he is a man deeply committed to his principles. I admire his idealism enormously. But I could not help being disturbed by the discrepancy between his ideals of solidarity and the intemperate style with which he presents

Alan Wolfe, a member of The Nation*'s editorial board, recently published* America's Impasse *(Pantheon).*

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those ideals. Evidently Bookchin's manual of style was written by Lenin, for the diatribes against his antagonists in this book are as mean-spirited as were Lenin's against the renegade Kautsky.

Bookchin seems unable to mention another writer without characterizing him with an adjective, and, with the exception of his writing about Fourier and a few others, nearly all of those adjectives are nasty. Eric Hobsbawm is "fatuous." Herbert Marcuse's notions are "absurd." Most other thinkers "boggle" Bookchin's imagination, and many are said to be beyond belief. Bookchin's concept of solidarity certainly does not apply to other social theorists.

Moreover, Bookchin appears to think that no one understands history as well as he does. He may not like Marx's conclusions, but he certainly seems to admire his knack for making the most unqualified generalizations. "Lavish material surpluses did not produce hierarchies and ruling classes," we are told with some certainty. "Rather, hierarchies and ruling classes produced lavish material surpluses." A few pages later Bookchin confidently states, "As to broad ideological matters, Christianity had fewer differences with Galileo than either of them realized," thereby establishing his ascendancy over the Roman Catholic Church, the founder of modern science, and over Bertolt Brecht.

In addition to these reservations, there are additional problems for me in endorsing Bookchin's ecological vision. They are best characterized by some passages in which he praises the fact that certain Plains Indians talk to their horses and, in so doing, "establish contact with a truth about reality that mythic behavior obscures and does not negate." Perhaps this is a wonderful poetic metaphor, but modernist that I am, I find it impossible to converse with my Cuisinart.

I very much want to share an ecological vision, for I am convinced that American capitalism will soon have destroyed nature entirely and replaced it with a shopping mall, but every time I consider New Age values, I run into problems. If we detest the artificial and inauthentic products of consumer capitalism run wild, do we have to love primitive ritual and long for states of heightened ecstasy? If we dislike scientific rationality, do we have to glory in illogical and nonsensical gibberish? To distrust cars, do we have to talk to horses? □

The Troublemaker

JEAN BETHKE ELSHTAIN

SIMONE WEIL: Interpretations of a Life. *Edited by George Abbott White. University of Massachusetts Press. 207 pp. $16.*

Nietzsche, Camus, Bonhoeffer, Arendt—all are vital thinkers the left has trouble accommodating. To this list one must add the name of Simone Weil. Weil is an enigmatic thinker all too often characterized as naïve or inconsistent by those comfortable with their orthodoxies. An anticommunist radical, a trenchant critic of Marxism, a mystic who experienced Christ's presence, an intellectual who turned her icy disdain upon intellectuals and academics who live apart from the masses and yet believe themselves ordained to prescribe for them, Weil defies easy categorization. Unable to assign Weil to any one team or other, many thinkers consign her instead to oblivion, writing her off as a quirky figure who was known to have odd habits and bizarre delusions and who died, well, strangely.

Yet she inspired Camus. And she belongs, according to Staughton Lynd in a forceful essay from this interesting collection, to a tradition "taken up by other non-conformist members of the left." To the name of Camus, Lynd adds those of C. Wright Mills, E.P. Thompson and the best of the New Left advocates of "participatory democracy" from the 1960s.

I believe Lynd is correct. Yet Weil remains for the left a peripheral figure. There are several reasons for this. She is a discursive, difficult and at times idiosyncratic thinker. But, more troubling, she falls victim to what Paulo Freire has called the left's "circle of certainty." Weil insisted that not all contradictions could be resolved and so opposed any theoretical vision of human life that neglected the particular and the unique.

If to this incompatibility with much theoretical leftism you add Weil's insistence on a very private code of honor and moral purity, you can understand why she has not been much of a figure in left-wing debate and reflection. But any of us who believe that our social order is unjust, inhumane and increasingly dangerous should try to see Weil correctly, her paradoxes intact, her integrity preserved, for she has important lessons to teach us.

Exploring Weil's importance means attending to the two central themes that are discussed by most of the contributors to this volume. The first is the theoretical dilemma of the relationship between theory and practice; the second involves Weil's critique of state socialist systems. In 1933, long before others on the left had the courage or the acuity to condemn totalitarian socialism, Weil wrote: "to call a State a 'workers State' when you go on to explain that each worker in it is put economically and politically at the complete disposal of a bureaucratic caste, sounds like a bad joke." It was, and is, as Solidarity, a true workers' movement, has tragically learned.

To the thorny dilemmas of theory and practice, then. Classical Marxism has no trouble condemning both the theory and the practice of capitalism. But something odd happens to the theory-practice nexus when the left turns to Marx, Marxism and societies that call themselves "socialist republics." On the one hand, Marxist theory is celebrated as a valid account of the inner dynamics of capitalism and as the proper prescription for setting things right. But what about Marxist practice? Why has the embodiment of the theory so often turned sour: one-party states, antidemocratic centralism, unaccountable bureaucracies, concentration camps and the rest? This is the question that separated Weil from her comrades on the left, some of whom justified these practices as regrettable but necessary.

Those who did not apologize for repressive necessity argued instead that the practice of state socialism did not adequately reflect, or was a perverse distortion of, Marxist theory. Weil would have none of this. She maintained that one finds in Marx theoretical tendencies that suggest the practical social and political evils of state socialism. As early as 1932 she insisted that the left also acknowledge and repudiate the parts of Marx's thought that embraced the cult of productivity,

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hence of big industry, and celebrated a blind belief in progress.

It is far too simple, Weil claimed, to hold Engels or Lenin responsible, for each drew upon and developed deterministic tendencies present in Marx. As Jerrold Seigel, author of *Marx's Fate*, has pointed out: "That Marxism has lent itself to the support of Stalinist and post-Stalinist tyranny is of course one of the main facts of history in the twentieth century. It seems obvious (although even this has been denied) that Marxist doctrine must contain elements that prepared it for this role." These elements encouraged Lenin to institutionalize one of the most pernicious innovations of American capitalist production, the Taylorization of work life. This is the rationalization of labor which breaks the production process into tiny parts and turns workers into cogs in the vast machinery of a wider culture of productivity. In 1934 Weil wrote that "assembly-line work and the specialization of tasks promoted by Taylorism destroy human dignity *no matter who owns the productive forces*" (emphasis added). And, stubbornly, she insisted that the scientific, positivist Marx, the Marx of a grand historic teleology, helped to pave the way for bureaucratic collectivism. She also called for embracing and extending the humanist core in Marx's thought that was at odds with his more deterministic formulations. Seigel again: "What needs to be examined . . . are . . . other features of the doctrine, just as characteristically and consistently Marxist, that demand the rejection of Leninism and its Soviet successors."

Weil's position on the theory-practice question is complex. George Abbott White argues that, as with Dorothy Day, Weil's life was not "a *means* of escaping the world but of encountering the world of injustice and suffering." By sharing in working-class life she arrived at a theoretical stance very different from the abstractions of Marxism. Weil's theory envisions a revolution from below in which working-class people are seen not as members of an abstract proletariat, an instrumentality within a fixed historic recipe, but as beings capable of thinking about the conditions of their lives and discussing these conditions in their own language. Collectives, Weil understood, are not communities. A community requires a sense of transcendent purpose that emerges from *its own sense of union* and its unique historical experiences. We would do well to keep this distinction in mind, just as we would do well to be mindful of Weil's conviction that both capitalist and bureaucratic Marxist positions "led to elite manipulation and centralized control of people's lives." We cannot afford the luxury of dismissing so stringent a moral conscience, and this collection provides us with a good opportunity for reflecting upon its uses. □

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'In My Time, In My Place'

GRACE SCHULMAN

LOVE POEMS. *By Yehuda Amichai. A Bilingual Edition. Harper & Row. 129 pp. $12.50. Paper $7.25.*

Yehuda Amichai has a rare ability for transforming the personal, even private, love situation, with all its joys and agonies, into everybody's experience, making his own time and place general. In this collection of love poems culled from six earlier volumes and translated from the Hebrew by various writers, Amichai conveys the largeness of individual passions. He speaks with harshness and insight that are often deflected by irony, understatement and outrageous humor.

Amichai and his family emigrated from Germany to Israel in 1936 when he was 12. He served in the Jewish Brigade of the British Army in World War II and as an infantryman in Israel's war of independence. In his poetry, he writes of Israel, of this time, this valley, this burning country, in ways that seem our own, his very particularity, paradoxically, assuring universality.

Many of the poems are set in Jerusalem, a hard city in which the landscape and the loved one are defined each by the other: "And like the contours of the Judean hills,/we shall never be linked." He writes with urgency of the present moment, often setting it against a background of Biblical places and religious legends, making his juxtaposition of the immediate and the eternal especially witty: a lover exclaims joyfully, "All one hundred and fifty psalms/cry out at once"; another sings, "I stuffed your bed with apples (as it is written in the Song of Songs)." And he combines tradition and love in utterly surprising ways: love's beginning is compared to "a cannon shot/like Ramadan"; one man's exasperation is presented in a strange, dramatic image:

> I'm going up Rabbi Kook Street,
> on my back your bed like a cross,
> though it's hard to suppose
> a woman's bed the icon of a new
> religion.
> ("In Rabbi Kook Street,"
> translated by Dennis Silk)

In his love poems, Amichai speaks of war, at times equating the struggle with tension between a man and a woman, and at other times contrasting war with love's peace. In "Savage Memories," translated by Robert Friend, there is a dialectic between love and war, which begins with a man's reflection, "I think these days of the wind in your hair," and then shifts to memory:

> and I think of the bullets that did not
> kill me
> but killed my friends—
> they who were better than me because
> they did not go on living . . .

Grace Schulman is The Nation*'s poetry editor.*

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and then swings back sharply to the picture of his love:

> and I think of you standing in summer
> naked before the stove,
> or bending, the better to read it, over a book
> in the last light of day.

Love is never limited to a pair of lovers. In "With Sad Slyness," the lover confesses,

> When I caress you at night
> I caress wars and ancient kings
> and whole nations wandering
> or resting at peace.

"You promised me there would be no war," the lover cries in "Just as It Was." "And in the unquiet nestled the quiet," a man observes in a poem called "In My Time, In My Place." Violence and unrest are never far from the lovers, at least in their memories and fears. In fact, this book is haunting for the poet's skill in writing of fleeting love, and it may well be that in art, unlike life, doomed love has a greater appeal than enduring love. "In the Middle of This Century," a beautiful poem translated by Assia Gutmann, begins:

> In the middle of this century we
> turned to each other
> with half faces and full eyes
> like an ancient Egyptian picture
> and for a short while
>
> I stroked your hair
> in the opposite direction to your journey.
> We called to each other.

And again, love's transience threatens perception, as in "Like Our Bodies' Imprint," also translated by Assia Gutmann:

> Like our bodies' imprint,
> not a sign will remain that we were in this place.
> The world closes behind us,
> the sand straightens itself.

To love, in Amichai's world, is, sadly, to imagine permanence in a world of change. The theme recalls Shakespeare's mutability: love, rooted in time, is destroyed by time; our vision of permanence is a reaction against the knowledge that we will die. In Amichai's poems, time's shifting sands are more volatile because they are the sands of Israel, and his notion of change involves also the modern tragedy of a nation's instability. So in nearly every poem, there is a heightened, almost visionary, awareness of the external world, a clarity generated by passion. He writes of

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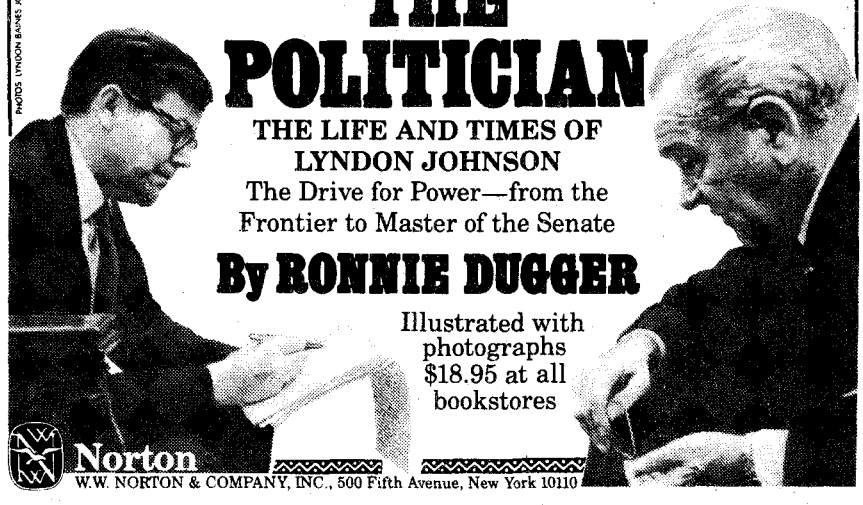

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the present moment, intensified by the transitory quality of human love and made more poignant because of constant reminders of ancient tradition and eternal values.

Another theme that emerges here is the distrust of language for its unfulfilled promise to master our temporal condition. It is a familiar theme in poetry, but especially interesting in the Hebrew of Amichai, who invents an idiom by using the language of industry, commerce and colloquial speech when he writes of love, gaining ironic and even violent effects from their juxtaposition, in the manner of the English metaphysical poets. In addition, his daring images are abundant and exact: "That we were only neighbors in the breeze,/thrown together in an ancient Babylonian khamsin" is outrageous, accurate and evocative of love's transience. The facing text of this unusual edition allows even the reader with a small knowledge of Hebrew to follow the poet's verse with its colloquial flatness and musical effects, and to see the exciting work that is being done by Yehuda Amichai in his language, in his time and in his place. □

The Cost of Commitment

FRED SETTERBERG

QUITTING TIME. *By Leonard Kriegel. Pantheon Books. 281 pp. $15.50.*

Stendhal described the novel as a "mirror carried along a main road." In his first novel, *Quitting Time*, Leonard Kriegel has carried his mirror along a road that has been too much ignored in contemporary fiction. He has given us Barney Kadish, American labor leader and Communist, compulsive lover and wretched father, idealist, pragmatist, a man fighting for integrity and usefulness while submitting to the proposition that "the forces of history wrestle with each other like drunken strangers in a Turkish bath." Born in Odessa to a stonecutter who substituted *Das Kapital* for the Talmud, Barney was taught "to choose a side, to take a position with your own. And then to hold on." *Quitting Time* explores the personal and political toll of holding on, the cost of a commitment carried across four decades.

The arena for this story is the Manhattan garment district, beginning in the 1920s. Young Barney organizes pattern makers, dyers and unskilled workers, most of them first generation Jews and Greeks. In his struggle to build the union, he battles employers and police, gangsters and, most critically, the growing suspicion among his own people that "the revolution is already a failure. The promise is America now." A half-century of recollections from the friends, partners and lovers of Barney Kadish are assembled to give this saga of the labor movement its authenticity. At its best, the novel has the visceral thrill of heroic stories passed down from generation to generation; history *lives* through recollection, re-examination. As the personal and the political converge, merge and maneuver for primacy, *Quitting Time* illuminates the roles of history's hidden players. "When the ax descends into Trotsky's head," recalls Greta Kadish, "Barney hugs his illusions even more tightly. By that time, he cannot hug me. I do not number myself among the gifts our time offers."

Quitting Time is a story of adjustment to early promise, when "life is rich, as it can be rich only to those who feel they have a stake in that future they talk so much about." As early promise turns to sorrow, betrayal and complexity, Barney Kadish attempts to relocate his vision and his aspirations in the American scheme of things. From his perch as a nearly respectable trade unionist, from his perspective as an immigrant revolutionary still-in-waiting, he acknowledges that he is "caught in this elongated America, this landscape that presses down on my mind so that its sheer emptiness is a box, a trap." Barney Kadish cannot answer this question: How is a radical to live in America?

Leonard Kriegel writes beautifully of ordinary people who see history as their personal crucible. He writes with grace about uncommon courage. Most of all, his characters merit our concern; we feel that their risks were worth taking. The story of individual sacrifice and collective achievement is not made to begin or end with the life of Barney Kadish; *Quitting Time* is suffused with the idea of possibility, with hope for another time when the world is "fresh and open and promising. And we are young enough to change it." □

Fred Setterberg is a writer who lives in Oakland, California.

FILMS.

ROBERT HATCH

Smash Palace
An Unfinished Piece for Player Piano

We have had two movies from New Zealand, both directed by Roger Donaldson. The first, which arrived here two months ago, was *Sleeping Dogs*, in which New Zealand is imagined to be devastated by a brutish civil war between left-wing guerrillas and fascist government forces. It worked up some physical excitement, but the plot seemed to me improbable and the main characters heavily manipulated. Donaldson now follows this with *Smash Palace*, which also traffics in high passions, but rings as true as a bell. He took *Sleeping Dogs* from a novel; *Smash Palace* is informed by events in his own past. That, no doubt, is what makes the difference.

The picture deals with four people—a man, his wife, their 7-year-old daughter and a family friend. They are all quite ordinary, which is to say that, portrayed with the insights and generosity that Donaldson and his cast bring to the story, they are complex, inconsistent, reckless and appealing. The title applies on two levels. It is the name of the automobile repair shop and wrecking yard owned by Al Shaw (Bruno Lawrence), and it suggests what is happening between Al and his wife, Jacqui (Anna Jemison). In addition to tuning engines and cannibalizing jalopies, Al builds and drives racing cars, and he met Jacqui in France when he was competing there. She found him exciting then (at moments, she still does), but she is a college-educated Parisian who did not bargain for life in a junkyard with a man who is happiest when crawling under machines with a wrench in his hand. In particular, she is not disposed to have their daughter raised as a garage mechanic, which appears to be Al's plan for the child he adores.

Al is smart, stubborn and capable. Largely inarticulate, he expresses his feelings in actions that not infrequently

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leaven violence with black humor. Jacqui is eloquent, sophisticated, highly sexed and as strong-willed as her husband. They embrace and torment each other in a rising storm of emotion that comes to a peak during the week or so when we observe them. The child (Greer Robson) becomes the bruised focus of their strife, and Ray (Keith Aberdein), the friend who tries unavailingly to keep clear of the tumult, is the catalyst of the smash.

A painter friend once remarked to me that you could judge the quality of an artist's work by the way he handled smoke in his landscapes. Similarly, a good test of a director's ability is the way he handles children in his films. Under Donaldson's direction, Robson is profoundly satisfactory. She is engaging, but never cute. She is enterprising within the limits of her experience, and reacts to the excesses of adult behavior that are inflicted on her with a mixture of wonder, excitement and fear that seems exactly right for an intelligent, well-balanced 7-year-old. In short, she is the precise opposite of that melancholy performer, the child star.

It strikes me that young Robson supplies the base line for the domestic drama. She is in the thick of it, both as participant and as awed observer, and she is the hostage who keeps her parents (especially her father, though her mother is also rocking dangerously on the rails) short of berserk tragedy. Marital discord is one of the staple movie themes; Donaldson's achievement is that he displays it in the most extravagant terms and yet retains one's belief in, solicitude for and friendship toward everyone concerned. Any viewer who has been caught in the crossfire of a disintegrating union will agree that, however bizarre the incidents of his film, Donaldson has its essentials well deployed.

When Nikita Mikhalkov made a film from Goncharov's *Oblomov*, he was drawing on a Russian classic. The same can hardly be said of his latest movie, *An Unfinished Piece for Player Piano*. It is based on *Platonov*, a very early Chekhov play which exists only in a rough copy, the author having destroyed the final text when it was refused production. In his life of Chekhov, David Magarshack describes the play as "very long and unwieldy," but adds that it "contains many themes which [the playwright] used in his great plays."

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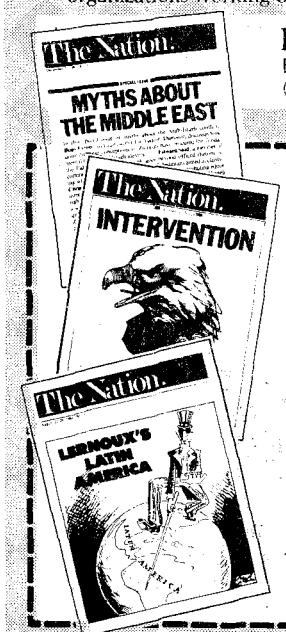

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In Mikhalkov's version it does so with a vengeance, seeming to embrace all the themes, not to mention all the characters, that Chekhov was ever to display on stage. Anna Petrovna, the delightful and irresponsible widow of a general, is presiding over a company of relatives and friends who have gathered on her bankrupt estate to enjoy the early summer weather. Prominent among them is her stepson, Sergei, an idealistic weakling who is so carried away by the loyal diligence of the peasantry that he proposes to distribute his castoff clothes among the mowers of the spring wheat. His wife, Sophia, had known Platonov, now an embittered schoolteacher, when they were both students. Their unexpected reunion rekindles an old love and its accompanying revolutionary fervor. Sasha, Platonov's sweetly simple wife, is reduced to tears and vertigo, and Sergei packs his bags but gets no farther than the carriage yard. Also in the company are an alcoholic doctor (played by the director) and an upstart plebeian of great wealth who has designs on the financially embarrassed mistress of the house and who disgusts his companions by spouting an elitist Darwinism. A far from diligent house servant is to be heard grumbling about the feckless ways of the gentry. There is much wailing against the debilitating boredom of rural life, much envy of the laborer's ennobling toil, frequent expression of resolve to cast off sloth and self-indulgence—all to the strains of a player piano that sparkles away with no one at the keyboard. If you did not know better, you might think that some present-day wit had composed a clever, rather demeaning parody of Chekhov's besetting concerns.

It may be that Mikhalkov chose to exhume this awkward but startlingly prophetic work because he thought it provided, in conveniently obvious terms, the basic elements of the playwright's attitudes toward the society of his time. He has cast his film with exactitude—you could spot these men and women as Chekhov characters if you encountered them in midtown Manhattan. And from them he has elicited the feverish charm that permeates Chekhov's theater. In a way, this is a thoroughly delightful movie. At the same time, there is something punitively clinical, a hint of superior laughter, about the approach. Chekhov was a doctor and his diagnoses were shrewd, but he never, at least in his mature works, mistook the illness for the whole person. It would surprise me if he did so in this early work. □

THEATER.

RICHARD GILMAN

The Hothouse

In 1958, after *The Room* and *The Dumbwaiter* had been produced and after *The Birthday Party*, his first full-length play, had been pretty well savaged by the London critics, Harold Pinter wrote a second long work and then shoved it into a drawer. Some years later, Pinter explained his suppression of this play by calling its characters "cardboard," among other negative judgments. Within the last year, though, he seems to have had a change of heart. The world premiere of *The Hothouse* took place in March in Providence, Rhode Island, where it was produced by The Trinity Square Repertory Company. This production, directed by Adrian Hall, the group's artistic director, has now come to New York City.

Anything by Pinter asks for attention, and I for one am happy to give it. I watched and listened, I took notes, and by the end it seemed to me that Pinter was right the first time; the play, while not exactly an embarrassment, is deficient in almost every dramaturgical and intellectual respect. Its central metaphor is strained and unconvincing, its procedures are chaotic and opaque, and its language—Pinter's great virtue, after all—is five or six cuts below his general level. I've asked myself what I would have thought had I not known who had written this piece, and had to admit that I probably would have left after the first act.

That would have been a mistake, but only a slight one. After the intermission, *The Hothouse* picks up briefly, before finally letting down with a rather resounding thump. The vigor that's generated for a while at the beginning of Act II arises almost entirely from a single character, and when he is left with nothing to do, the play surrenders to its inherent debilities.

The setting of *The Hothouse*, referred to merely as "The Institution," is clearly a psychiatric hospital. We are shown the director's office, a sitting room, chain-metal doors and some stairways; the patients, who never actually appear on stage, are up above. These patients are known by numbers instead of names, and indeed the whole atmosphere is intended, one assumes, to

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convey the distant, terrifyingly impersonal power of the State (a shadowy "Ministry" figures in somewhere) over its people's lives. Sure enough, several generous or fawning, but in any case superficially educated, reviewers were pleased to describe the proceedings as "Kafkaesque," which I can assure you they're not.

Kafka would never have given his characters names like Lush, Lobb, Tubb and Cutts (there are also Roote, Lamb and Gibbs), a nomenclature derived from an idea—influential in the late 1950s and doubtless owing much to Beckett's Nagg, Nell and Krapp—of what "absurd" and unrepresentational characters should be called. And Kafka would never have been so obvious in his schema of events; *The Hothouse* is full of activities that spell out with painful heaviness Pinter's imaginative intention, from scenes of electric shock therapy, arbitrarily imposed, to a culminating "massacre" (played out offstage) in which the patients wipe out the staff almost to a man.

This early play does have some traces of Pinter's stylistic hallmarks: his famous repetitions, for example, and his wonderfully shrewd eye for banality. But these things are buried in a text that feels as if it's been composed of scraps of intuition and perception, theories or rumors of psychic and political oppression, instead of a real vision of them. In none of Pinter's other plays, including the three that preceded this one, is there such lack of clarity (by which I mean imaginative control and not narrative openness) or such straining after effects.

The Hothouse has been described by several reviewers as "fiercely funny," but it isn't. It does have one quite funny stretch, some ten or fifteen minutes at the beginning of Act II, but this segment's humor may have as much to do with a single performance as with the script. George Martin plays Roote, the director of the Institution (an archetypal Colonel Blimp), with great vigor and panache. Violent, coy, fawning and imperious by turns, Martin is the model of bureaucratic madness. "I've given up visiting the patients," he says. "It's not worth it, it's a waste of time." When he opens a bottle of Scotch he immediately throws the top into the wastebasket; when he addresses the staff on Christmas night it's a masterpiece of fumbling pomposity. But Roote drifts out of the play after a while, and nothing comes along to fill the hole. □

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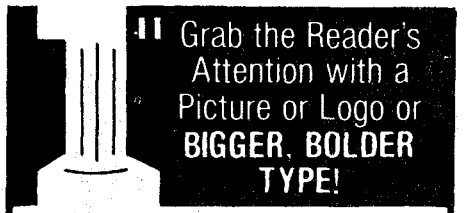

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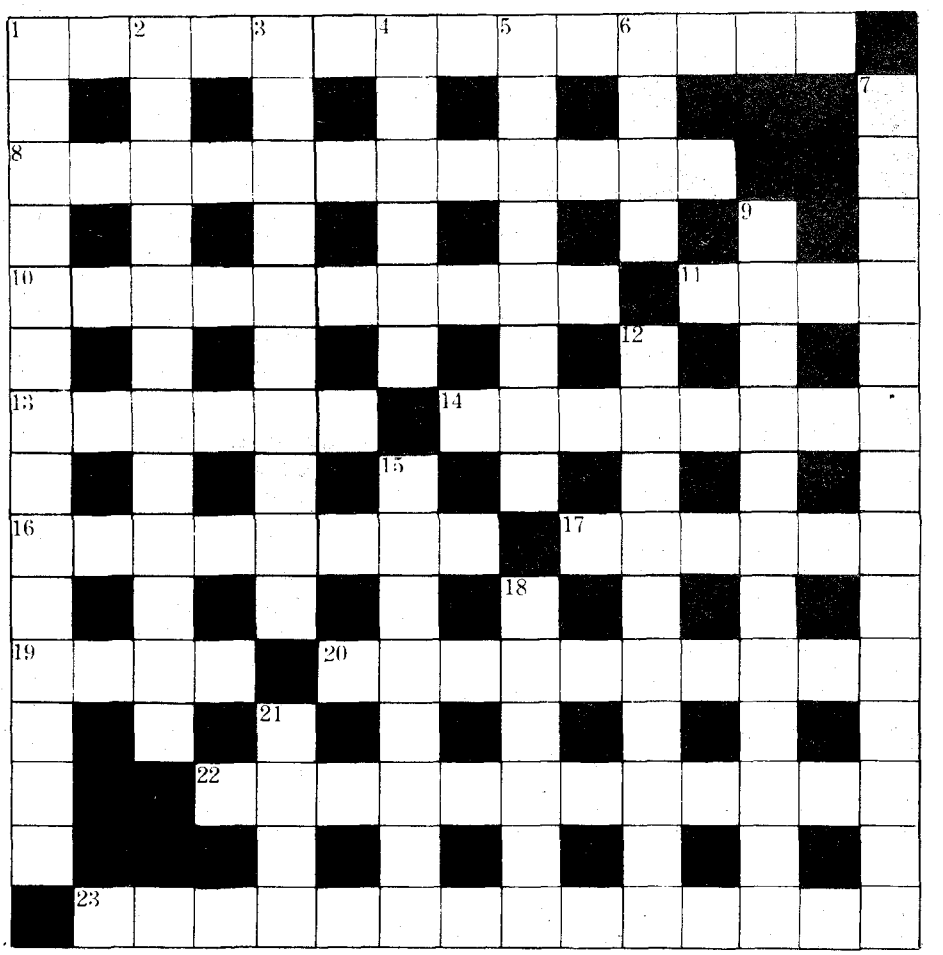

ACROSS

1 Down to earth humor? (9,5)
8 The means of making a comeback. (6,6)
10 Behaves like an eager beaver—even more so. (10)
11 A pleasant sort. (4)
13 A homeless puppy, and how he went? (6)
14 How commuters travel and do a front turn. (2,3,3)
16 Used to be "Rock" to some. (It could be à la carte, if the last letter were the last letter.) (8)
17 It helps make tyres go 'round. (6)
19 One of those who spun thread, measured it or severed it. (4)
20 Round-up time is different without you, as it sounds—or perhaps you have begged to differ. (10)
22 What was White doing with the early shows? It's shocking! (12)
23 Ways of dumping stock on the market? (Callers can see a difference.) (9,5)

DOWN

1 A business of one's own, with airplanes of far different construction. (8,6)
2 Establish as the real McCoy. (12)
3 The true are not exactly in Indiana! (5,5)
4 Lower rent for the little snip! (6)
5 Without it, you'd be nowhere. (8)
6 Exclamatory molding. (4)
7 Tough guys, perhaps, but with hearts of gold! (4-6,4)
9 Distinctive part of your car. (12)
12 An interest sort of diverts one. (10)
15 I am Satan reformed, down under! (8)
18 Design made of a hospiceless insomniac. (6)
21 Legal records are part of the play with a suitable finish. (4)

SOLUTION TO PUZZLE NO. 1916

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Y	■	V	■	A	■	I	■	E	■	R	■	I	■	E
■	W	A	N	D	E	R	E	D	■	A	B	N	E	R
F	■	I	■	■	■	A	■	■	■	N	■	E	■	P
R	U	L	E	R	■	N	A	V	I	G	A	T	O	R
E	■	■	■	A	■	T	■	O	■	E	■	■	■	I
E	X	T	R	I	N	S	I	C	■	D	A	R	T	S
M	■	A	■	L	■	■	■	A	■	■	■	A	■	E
A	L	T	E	R	■	R	E	T	I	C	U	L	E	■
S	■	T	■	O	■	U	■	I	■	R	■	E	■	S
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